THE SECOND WORLD WAR

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VOLUME TWO

BY

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TO
MY MOTHER

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CHAPTER I

FRANCE AFTER THE FALL

WHEN we consider the question of France after the German victory, we must do so under three separate heads—Vichy and those who collaborated with the invaders; those who fought on under de Gaulle, and those who remained underground to carry on a gallant and bitter struggle. But before giving a detailed account of the activities of the men of Vichy, let me first touch on the position in France during the surrender and immediately afterwards; secondly, how General de Gaulle suddenly rose to world-wide prominence: and thirdly, how those anti-Fascists who refused to be quelled by the Huns carried on the underground resistance.

Fateful decisions for the future of war-time France were reached at Bordeaux on June 15th and 16th. They were three in number:

1. It was decided that the government should be kept in France:
2. The offer by Mr. Churchill (see Volume I) of a Franco-British union was rejected; and
3. An Armistice from Germany was to be sought.

During these two days in Bordeaux—a city overcrowded with panic-stricken refugees, also

panic-stricken leaders; everyone dazed and overwhelmed by the terrific happenings of the previous few weeks; a city immediately threatened by the never-ending march of the victorious Germans—two groups faced each other, each proposing entirely different lines of action. As if in a flash all those forces that had lain under the surface in France for years before came to the top.

Those miserable Fascists, led by Laval, men who were prepared to sell their country for their own self-aggrandisement and had been working to that end for years, came out in full cry,—France was lost; they must surrender immediately to prevent useless slaughter; they must give France over to the enemy and collaborate with him—it was useless to try to fight on in the colonies. Pétain had been brought from his post as Ambassador to the Spanish Fascists and the French counterparts proposed to set him up as a figure-head. He was senile and would be an easy tool in their hands. They had only to whisper to him that it was the only way to save France from the "Reds"—an even worse fate than subjugation to the Huns! He had a great name behind him and they were to surround him with a facade of venerable dignity—the "grand old man of France" had come forward at that momentous hour to be with his countrymen and share their sorrows and try to build up France again.

Pétain found himself faced with Laval's group on the one hand and the other led by Reynaud and Mandel who, it is generally understood,

were prepared to carry on the war from the *Empire and from London. They had some* powerful backing but after a 48-hour struggle they were defeated—Pétain threw in his lot with the defeatists. If he had turned the other way so much degradation and misery would have been avoided and France would have been able to stand more honourably among the United Nations.

On his arrival in Bordeaux Laval opened his headquarters at the Town Hall, having the full support of the Fascist mayor of the city. He gathered round him well-known appeasers of the type of Bonnet and also a large number of comparatively unknown politicians, greedy for whatever positions they could get out of the situation. Reynaud lacking firmness and decision during these critical hours resigned and France's fate was sealed.

The new Pétain Government included Weygand and Darlan but not Laval—however, he was soon to make up for that temporary eclipse.

It is interesting to recall that according to a book published some time later in France in praise of Laval, he told President Lebrun, who it is understood was prepared to leave as late as June 23rd to form a new government in the Colonies—"I do not recognise your right to transfer the government to Africa," adding—"Only two men, General Weygand and Marshal Pétain, are competent to state whether the war can be carried on. If they decide that we should cease firing, we must all bow to their decision." Laval went on to threaten—"If you leave the soil of France,

you will never set foot on it again." And persuaded that it was an impossible task for Britain to fight on with the support of her Empire and that help could not be given quickly enough from America, Pétain and Weygand were perfectly willing to throw France to the mercy of the invaders.

After the Armistice, a violent anti-British campaign was started in an attempt to persuade the people of France to collaborate as fully as possible with Germany. Pétain himself, by his broadcast speeches, took no small part in it, but despite that and the general loathing throughout France for the new state of affairs and particularly the men of Vichy, for some considerable time he held the respect of large sections of his countrymen. This was mainly due to the emotional feelings, in the midst of such an overwhelming disaster, that his name raised and not so much to anything he had to say.

Soon after the Armistice, thanks to Laval's scheming, the National Assembly voted its own suspension by deciding that "the National Assembly grants all powers to the government of the Republic under the signature and authority of Marshal Pétain, President of the Council of Ministers, for the purpose of promulgating, in one or several acts, the new Constitution of the French State," and Vichy soon set to work to remould the nation in the name of the "National Revolution." All possible opposition was swept aside; those said to be "guilty" of the war in plunging the country into a hopeless struggle were also put on trial.

Thereafter Pétain spoke of a "new France," to be run on totalitarian lines, the general idea being that, with Britain defeated, she would serve as some sort of a link "between the new Continental authoritarianism and an Anglo-Saxon world finally chastised and cured of the aberrations of democracy." Thus France might possibly escape complete slavery and find herself a niche in Hitler's "New Order."

And now let us turn to the man who had foreseen the French disaster, tried in vain to warn his leaders and who, instead of giving way to despair after the surrender, encouraged thousands of his countrymen throughout the world to carry on the struggle.

Born at Lille on November 22, 1890, Charles de Gaulle passed with honours into the Military Academy of Saint-Cyr.

As a lieutenant and company commander, he served under Pétain at Douamont, the famous Verdun fort, where he was wounded by a shell-splinter. Captured by a German patrol, he made five attempts to escape from a prisoners-of-war camp but was recaptured every time and suffered severe penalties.

After the Armistice in 1918, he served under General Weygand in the Polish campaign in 1920-21.

He was subsequently appointed Professor of Military History at his old Academy of Saint-Cyr, where he attracted the attention of his superior officers and was in consequence sent to the Ecole de Guerre, corresponding to the Staff College in Britain, where again his career was

linked with the life of Marshal Pétain, to whom he was appointed Aide-de-Camp during the latter's term as Commander-in-Chief of the French Armies.

In 1927 he returned to regimental duty, and was given command of a battalion of "Chasseurs à Pied," corresponding to the British light infantry.

Two years later he returned to the Staff and travelled extensively through Iraq, Persia and Egypt on behalf of the French Government.

Returning to France in 1932, de Gaulle was appointed General Secretary of the Committee of National Defence, occupying that post until 1936. After a further course at the Centre for Advanced Military Studies, he was given, in 1937, command of the 507th Regiment of Tanks from which he rose, in 1939, to the command of the Brigade of Tanks of the 5th Lorraine Army, with the rank of Colonel, which he held on the outbreak of war.

On May 15, 1940, de Gaulle was given his stars as General de Brigade and took command of the 4th Armoured Division, which went into action with great distinction at Laon during the battles of May 16 and 19 and in the neighbourhood of Abbeville on May 30 and 31.

It has been recorded by expert observers that during the battle in the neighbourhood of Abbeville, the 4th Armoured Division played a most important part and launched several counter-attacks, which were the only successful moves made by the French armies in that area after May 10.

Finally, on June 6, General de Gaulle received an urgent call, by a messenger who reached him at midnight, to go to Paris. By dawn he was in Paris and M. Reynaud appointed him Under-Secretary of State for National Defence and War.

The appointment was welcomed by all sections of the French Press. Many articles were devoted to the General who in 1934 had written a book entitled—"Wanted A Professional Army," in which he emphasised the value of the mass employment of armoured vehicles.

M. Léon Blum in "Le Populaire" pointed out that although General de Gaulle, whose ideas and books were often "criticised and put on the index of banned books" by highly-placed members of the General Staff, was not the inventor of tanks and mechanised infantry, he was the first to set out the idea of the Panzer division tactics which the Germans adopted so successfully in the battle for France. In fact France was beaten by German use of de Gaulle's methods.

"La Depeche" recalled some prophetic words of General de Gaulle in which he indicated the routes of invasion which were actually used by the Germans in their attacks.

"Le Matin" claimed that General de Gaulle "six years ago had foreseen the Belgian drama" and quoted a passage which indicated the consequences of a Belgian capitulation.

The "Paris-Soir" and "Action Francaise" quoted various passages from the works of General de Gaulle, which foresaw the methods of warfare afterwards employed by the enemy.

If de Gaulle's warnings had been listened to, "the Germans would not now be in France," said the newspaper "Justice."

Great confidence was aroused by his appointment and M. Blum summed up by saying: "The doctor can choose the remedy because he knows the disease."

One of the most interesting articles about him was published in the Paris newspaper "Candide" (on June 5) under the heading "A Prophet."

It said: "To have foreseen the defection of Belgium, massive mechanical war employed at selected points, the number of tanks that the Reich would throw into its opening attack, the surprise in the Ardenne and on the Meuse, that is much for one brain to achieve, even though the brain in question is that of a technician. Such, however, is the case of Colonel de Gaulle, promoted General on May 26, who on the approach of his 50th year is one of the lights of the Army and the hopes of this country. We have no space to give more than brief instances of this foresight dating back to 1934. Let us quote from the General whom Germany has translated and whose opinions it has known how to appreciate and use:

"First of all on the subject of Belgium:

" 'France's protection depends on Belgium. Let a solid barrier in the Ardenne and Luxemburg be erected against the Germans, and we have assurance in time and space. But let an Emperor Otto, a Charles V, a Prince Eugene, Cobourg, Blucher, or von Kluck become masters of the bridges over the Meuse and establish their

strength on Flemish or Walloon soil, and we shall have the most exhausting campaign forced upon us. How many manoeuvres might be employed to prevent Belgium committing herself deeply as the advance guard! Without going so far as to imagine that the intrigues of Ferrand, Count of Flanders, will ever be revived, or without even supposing that an invaded Belgium would wish to apply Leopold's plan of leaving the passage clear and only arming Antwerp, there is no certainty that on every occasion she would accept a risk in the same uncalculating and unreserved manner as did Albert I in her name, and in any case let us not count on her exhausting herself in order to protect us.'

"On mechanization and its results:

" 'Armour in war has returned, carried by the motor. The motor revives the power of surprise. ......The motor has restored in detail the power of manoeuvring a sudden appearance and intimidation since it can present itself under fire either in front or on flank and can continue in movement while firing and change direction. A strongly-armoured brigade rolling across the fields as quick as a horse can gallop, armed with 150 guns of medium calibre, with 400 smaller guns and 600 machine-guns, leaping over ditches 3 metres wide, climbing up slopes 30 feet high, overturning trees, knocking down walls, crushing everything, will form the main echelon of the big units. It will be also their eyes and their scouts under continuous protection from the air. By boldness in advance what the cavalry did formerly can be multiplied many times over. This mechanical

system of fire, shock, speed and camouflage will reveal itself when first let loose by bringing into action at least 2,000 tanks.' "

"Candide" continued—"This is feature for feature and point for point the method of penetration by Germany on the Aisne and the Somme. As for the surprise which overtook General Corap's army in the Sedan area, here is de Gaulle's prophetic description of the battle which overwhelmed the North and worked itself out at the end of May.

" 'The banks of the Moselle and the Meuse resting at one end on the Lorraine plateau and on the other on the Ardenne form appreciable but not very deep obstacles, so that a mistake, surprise or an act of negligence will be enough to involve their loss and to leave open to attack from behind the first withdrawal in Hainaut or in Flanders. In those flat plains there is neither wall nor ditch on which to pin resistance. There is no line of dominating heights, there are no rivers parallel to the front. Geography itself has provided for invasion by numerous roads of penetration, the valleys of the Meuse and the Sambre, of the Scheldt, the Scarpe, and the Lys, where rivers, roads and rail are there to guide the enemy.'

"In many other spheres which inform and impress the intelligence, the realistic and prophetic sense of General de Gaulle, the author of works and studies destined to become classic, is equally unique." concluded the newspaper.

On the evening of June 18, 1940, a rallying call to Frenchmen throughout the world was

sounded by de Gaulle from London, when he told his countrymen—"Nothing is lost."

He declared:

"The leaders who, for many years past, have been at the head of the French armed forces, have set up a government.

"Alleging the defeat of our armies, this government has entered into negotiations with the enemy with a view to bringing about a cessation of hostilities. It is quite true that we were, and still are, overwhelmed by enemy mechanized forces, both on the ground and in the air. It was the tanks, the planes, and the tactics of the Germans, far more than the fact that we were outnumbered, that forced our armies to retreat. It was the German tanks, planes, and tactics that provided the element of surprise which brought our leaders to their present plight.

"But has the last word been said? Must we abandon all hope? Is our defeat final and irremediable? To those questions I answer—No!

"Speaking in full knowledge of the facts, I ask you to believe me when I say that the cause of France is not lost. The very factors that brought about our defeat may one day lead us to victory.

"For, remember this, France does not stand alone. She is not isolated. Behind her is a vast Empire, and she can make common cause with the British Empire, which commands the seas and is continuing the struggle. Like England, she can draw unreservedly on the immense industrial resources of the United States.

"This war is not limited to our unfortunate

country. The outcome of the struggle has not been decided by the Battle of France. This is a world war. Mistakes have been made, there have been delays and untold suffering, but the fact remains that there still exists in the world everything we need to crush our enemies some day. To-day we are crushed by the sheer weight of mechanized force hurled against us, but we can still look to a future in which even greater mechanized force will bring us victory. The destiny of the world is at stake.

"I, General de Gaulle, now in London, call on all French officers and men who are at present on British soil, or may be in the future, with or without their arms; I call on all engineers and skilled workmen from the armament factories who are at present on British soil, or may be in the future, to get in touch with me.

"Whatever happens, the flame of French resistance must not and shall not die."

Thereafter, in sharp contrast to the hopeless defeatism that had spread through France, de Gaulle's faith shone like a beacon in the overwhelming darkness of defeat. It is interesting now, in view of all that has happened since 1940, to recall those first efforts made by him to bring his countrymen into the Allied cause. Broadcasting on June 19, he said:

"Frenchmen must now be fully aware that all ordinary forms of authority have disappeared.

"Faced by the bewilderment of my countrymen, by the disintegration of a government in thrall to the enemy, by the fact that the institutions of my country are incapable, at the moment,

of functioning, I, General de Gaulle, a French soldier and military leader, realize that I now speak for France.

"In the name of France, I make the following solemn declaration:

"It is the bounden duty of all Frenchmen who still bear arms to continue the struggle. For them to lay down their arms, to evacuate any position of military importance, or agree to hand over any part of French territory, however small, to enemy control, would be a crime against our country. For the moment I refer particularly to French North Africa—to the *integrity* of French North Africa.

"The Italian armistice is nothing but a clumsy trap. In the Africa of Clauzel, Bugeaud, Lyautey, and Nogues, honour and duty strictly enjoin that the French should refuse to carry out the conditions imposed by the enemy.

"The thought that the panic of Bordeaux could make itself felt across the sea is not to be borne.

"Soldiers of France, wherever you may be, arise!"

Three days later:

"The French Government, after having asked for an armistice, now knows the conditions dictated by the enemy.

"The result of these conditions would be the complete demobilization of the French land, sea, and air forces, the surrender of our weapons and the total occupation of French territory. The French Government would come under German and Italian tutelage.

"It may therefore be said that this armistice would not only be a capitulation, but that it would also reduce the country to slavery.

"Now, a great many Frenchmen refuse to accept either capitulation or slavery, for reasons which are called honour, commonsense, and the higher interests of the country.

"I say honour, for France has undertaken not to lay down arms save in agreement with her Allies. As long as the Allies continue the war, her Government has no right to surrender to the enemy. The Polish, Norwegian, Belgian, Netherlands and Luxemburg Governments, though driven from their territories, have thus interpreted their duty.

"I say commonsense, for it is absurd to consider the struggle as lost. True, we have suffered a major defeat. We lost the Battle of France through a faulty military system, mistakes in the conduct of operations, and the defeatist spirit shown by the Government during recent battles. But we still have a vast Empire, our fleet is intact, and we possess large sums in gold. We still have the gigantic potentialities of American industry. The same war conditions which caused us to be beaten by 5,000 planes and 6,000 tanks can to-morrow bring victory by means of 20,000 tanks and 20,000 planes.

"I say the higher interests of the country, for this is not a Franco-German war to be decided by a single battle. This is a world war. No one can foresee whether the neutral countries of to-day will not be at war to-morrow, or whether Germany's allies will always remain her allies.

If the powers of freedom ultimately triumph over those of servitude, what will be the fate of a France which has submitted to the enemy?

"Honour, commonsense, and the interests of the country require that all free Frenchmen, wherever they be, should continue the fight as best they may.

"It is therefore necessary to group the largest possible French force wherever this can be done. Everything which can be collected by way of French military elements and potentialities for armament production must be organized wherever such elements exist.

"I, General de Gaulle, am undertaking this national task here in England.

"I call upon all French servicemen of the land, sea, and air forces; I call upon French engineers and skilled armament workers who are on British soil, or have the means of getting here, to come and join me.

"I call upon the leaders, together with all soldiers, sailors, and airmen of the French land, sea, and air forces, wherever they may now be, to get in touch with me.

"I call upon all Frenchmen who want to remain free to listen to my voice and follow me.

"Long live free France in honour and independence!"

On the 24th of June he declared that, somewhere, the flame of French resistance must burn bright—

"This evening I should just like to say, since someone must do so, what shame and revolt rend the heart of every true Frenchman.

"There is no point in commenting at length on the various clauses of the Franco-German and Franco-Italian armistices. They can all be summed up in this one phrase: France and her people, bound hand and foot, have been surrendered to the enemy.

"But though the terms of this capitulation have been set down in black and white, there are countless men, women, adolescents, and children in our country who will never accept it with resignation, who will always spurn it and have none of it.

"France is like a boxer who has been struck to the ground by a terrible blow. She lies there helpless. But she knows, she feels, that the strong tide of life still flows in her veins. She knows, she feels, that the fight is not over, that the last word has not been spoken.

"She knows, she feels, that she deserves a better fate than the slavery to which the Bordeaux Government has agreed.

"She knows, she feels, that in her Empire great forces have arisen to resist the enemy and save her honour. Already the will to fight on has shown itself in many parts of the French overseas possessions.

"She knows, she feels, that her Allies are more than ever resolved to continue the struggle until final victory is achieved.

"She sees in the New World immense reserves of material and moral strength which may one day rise up and overwhelm the enemies of freedom.

"We must have an ideal. We must have

hope. Somewhere the flame of French resistance must burn with a shining light.

"Officers, soldiers, sailors, airmen, and engineers of France, wherever you may be, do your utmost to join those who are determined to fight on. The day is coming, I promise you, when our combined forces, a French army of picked warriors, a mechanized army on land, on sea, and in the air, fighting shoulder to shoulder with our Allies, will win back freedom for the world and greatness for our country."

Two days later he replied to Pétain:

"This, Marshal Pétain, is the voice of a French soldier, speaking to you by wireless from across the sea.

"Yesterday I heard *your* voice, with which I have long been familiar, and listened, not without emotion, to what you said to the people of France in justification of your actions.

"First, you described the military inferiority to which our defeat was due. Then you stated that, confronted with a situation which was considered hopeless, you had assumed power in order to obtain an honourable peace from the enemy.

"Next, you declared that, in view of the conditions laid down by the enemy, there was no other choice but to agree to them and remain in Bordeaux, or else reject them and take refuge in the Empire in order to continue the struggle from across the Mediterranean. You added that you had considered it your duty to remain in Bordeaux.

"Finally, while admitting that a most cruel fate awaited the French people, you urged those

same people to bring about a national recovery in spite of everything through work and discipline.

"Marshal, in this hour of shame and anger for our country, there must be a voice to answer you. And this evening that voice is mine.

"Admittedly, it has been shown that our military inferiority was appalling. But to what was this inferiority due?

"It was due to a faulty military system. France was crushed, not indeed because we were outnumbered by the Germans, and certainly not because they outdid us in courage, but purely and simply because the enemy mechanized force launched to attack was superior to ours in strength and manoeuvrability. Everyone who took part in the fighting knows that. If France had no such armament of her own, if her troops had been trained only for defensive and stationary warfare, whose, Marshal, was the blame?

"After the war of 1914-1918 you were in charge of our military organization: until 1932 you were Commander-in-Chief; in 1935 you were Minister for War. During all that time you were the highest military authority in France, but did you ever so much as raise your voice to propose, to request, to demand the reforms which were so imperative?

"And yet, on the strength of the magnificent services rendered during the last war, you assumed the responsibility of asking the enemy for an armistice.

"You were inveigled into the belief, Marshal, that this armistice, requested by a great soldier

like yourself at the hands of other soldiers, would be an honourable one for France. But now, I imagine, your last illusions are gone. There is nothing but dishonour in this armistice. Two-thirds of our territory have been handed over to be occupied by the enemy—and by what an enemy! Our army is to be completely demobilized. Our officers and men who have been taken prisoner by the enemy are to remain in captivity. Our fleet, our planes, our tanks, and our weapons are to be surrendered intact, so that the Axis can use them against our Allies. The country, the Government, and you yourself are to be reduced to servitude. Did France need a man like you, Marshal—you, the Conqueror of Verdun—to negotiate and agree to the conditions of such bondage?

"But you say that you thought it possible, that you thought it your duty, to subscribe to them. You dismissed as absurd any further resistance in the Empire. You regarded as contemptible the efforts now being made—and the far greater efforts still to be made—by our Allies of the British Empire. You refused in advance to draw upon the vast resources of America.

"You have been playing to lose, and have thrown in your hand and made us empty our pockets, as though not a single trump remained to us. All this was due to a kind of deep despondency and morose scepticism which was perhaps largely responsible for the breakdown of our forces in France when it came to making a final stand.

"And in the same way, Marshal, you now urge France—a country delivered up to the enemy, plundered and down-trodden by our hereditary

foe—to resume her labours, put her house in order and set about national recovery. What sort of an atmosphere is this in which to strive towards national recovery? By what means, and in the name of what faith, is the miracle to be wrought? At this moment France lies prostrate beneath the jackboot of Germany and the slipper of Italy.

"I believe you when you say that France will rise again—but it will be in freedom, it will be in victory. Throughout her Empire, throughout the world, here, in England, her sons are gathering and forming organized forces. The day will come when our arms, forged anew in distant lands, but sharpened to a keen edge, will join with those of our Allies and, perhaps, of other countries which have not yet rallied to the cause of freedom, and we shall return triumphant to our native land.

"Then, and then only, we shall be in a position to build France anew."

And on June 28 on the occasion of de Gaulle's recognition as leader of the Free French he stated:

"The undertaking just given by His Majesty's Government, recognizing me as Leader of the Free French, is of great importance and profound significance.

"This undertaking enables the Free French to organize themselves for the continuation of the struggle at the side of the Allies.

"This undertaking means that the Free French effort and that of our Allies are one until Victory.

"I have arrived at the following decisions:

"(1) All Frenchmen now on British territory, as well as those who may subsequently arrive on British soil, are under my authority.

"(2) French land, sea, and air forces are to be formed immediately. For the time being, they will be composed of volunteers. First, they will support every attempt at resistance in any part of the French Empire. I call upon all French soldiers, sailors, and airmen to join them. I invite all young men, everyone capable of bearing arms, to enlist in their ranks.

"(3) All French officers, soldiers, sailors, and airmen, wherever they may be, are in duty bound to resist the enemy. If circumstances are such that they are threatened with having to surrender their weapons, planes, or ships, they must at once go to the nearest centre of French resistance, taking with them their weapons, planes, or ships. If no such centre is within reach, they must forthwith make their way to British territory, where they will be under my orders.

"(4) A French organization is being set up in Great Britain for the manufacture and purchase of war weapons, and another French organization has been established to undertake research work and study improvements in war material.

"Generals, Commanding Officers, and Governors in the Empire, get in touch with me so that we may combine our efforts and save the French territories. In spite of the capitulations to which so many of those responsible for the honour of our flag and the greatness of our

country have agreed, Free France still lives. We shall prove this by force of arms."

Then on July 2 came his noted broadcast addressed to all true Frenchmen :

"Nine days ago, the Government then in Bordeaux signed the capitulation demanded by Germany.

"Seven days ago, the same Government signed the capitulation demanded by Italy.

"It is useless to dwell further on the appalling consequences of this twofold surrender. But it is my duty as a soldier to stress one such consequence.

"I refer to the moral dilemma which has been forced on every citizen of France.

"After the collapse of the General Staff and Government, following the overwhelming onslaught of the German mechanized forces, two paths were open to our country.

"One was the path of surrender and despair, chosen by the Bordeaux Government. Violating the solemn agreement between France and her Allies, that Government, to use Tacitus' phrase, 'rushed headlong into slavery.'

"The other path is that of honour and hope—the path chosen by my companions and myself.

"But a great many Frenchmen are torn between the two. On the one hand, there is the appeal made to them by rulers who have come under the power of the enemy; on the other, the appeal of France calling aloud for deliverance.

"I urge these good and simple French folk who value their country above pride, terror, or self-interest, to ask themselves these questions :

"Would Joan of Arc, Richelieu, Louis XIV, Carnot, or Napoleon; would Gambetta, Poincaré, Clemenceau, or Marshal Foch ever have agreed to surrender French weapons to the enemies of France in order that they might be turned against her Allies? Would Duquesne, Tourville, Suffren, Courbet, or Guepratte ever have agreed to hand over the French Fleet intact, to be placed at the mercy of the enemy?

"Would Dupleix, Montcalm, Bugeaud, or Marshal Lyautey ever have agreed to evacuate strategic positions in the Empire without striking a blow, or have allowed it to come under enemy control without even firing a shot?

"True Frenchmen should ask themselves these questions. They will immediately see where their own interests lie, and decide that the path of honour is also that of commonsense. They will immediately see, too, that it is the path ordained by honour and by the spirit of France.

"The spirit of France! It is with the men who fight on by every means in their power, whether actively or passively—the men who refuse to give in, the men who will one day be present at the victory."

Thereafter de Gaulle again and again appealed to France to rise again. He was unsparing in his criticism of Pétain. He replied to the Marshal's senile utterances—on August 16—as follows:

"Last Wednesday evening, in a voice of gloom, Marshal Pétain spoke on the situation in France.

"He painted it in sombre colours. Further-

more, the head of the Vichy State attempted to exonerate himself. Finally, the head of the Vichy State gave free rein to his anger at discovering so many obstacles in his path.

"Having failed to overcome these obstacles, he now asks the French to put up with them.

"Unfortunately, it is only too obvious that life is not worth living under the material and moral régime imposed on France as a result of the abominable armistices. The armistice terms were drawn up by the enemy with the sole intention that they *should* be intolerable.

"The occupation of two-thirds of our territory, the threat overhanging the remaining third, and the systematic separation of the two zones would, in themselves, be enough to render any form of national life impossible. But the enemy is doing everything in his power to add to the general disorganization—looting our economic resources, imposing forced labour on many of our compatriots, creating artificial separatism, and corrupting French minds by means of treacherous wireless and newspaper reports. There can be no doubt as to his intention: to reduce France to despair, after which the enemy imagines he can mould at will the body and soul of our country. That is what Hitler calls 'organising the continent of Europe'.

"Marshal Pétain bears the terrible responsibility of having asked for and accepted these infamous armistices. He has put forward excuses for the capitulation. Marshal Pétain and his retinue first of all advanced the argument of a so-called 'guilty' France. According to them,

the French people deserve their present misfortunes. So much the worse for them if they must now take their punishment. Marshal Pétain and his retinue likewise maintained that, since all was lost, surrender was an absolute necessity. Finally, Marshal Pétain and his retinue spread the illusion that, thanks to them, France would be reborn.

"We now see the excuses advanced by Marshal Pétain for what they are worth—that is to say, nothing.

"The French people remember that they wholeheartedly accepted every sacrifice demanded by their leaders. If the armies of France were caught unprepared by this war of machines, it was due to the fact that the necessary steps had never been taken. One day, I hope to give chapter and verse for this statement.

"The French people can see that the war is by no means lost. They know that by surrendering their arms and separating France from her Allies the best cards in their hand were thrown away.

"The French people know that the reconstruction of their country is absolutely impossible under the armistice régime. They know they are condemned to slavery and destitution so long as the enemy remains on their soil and his collaborators exercise what they are pleased to call power.

"Marshal Pétain may well seek to offer dismal justification for his actions. They are only empty phrases. The French were betrayed, and they see to what a plight they have been brought. But I myself know, too, that with

each day that passes they see more clearly where salvation lies.

"The way to salvation is through victory. The French people look to those who fight—to the men Marshal Pétain and his retinue condemn as traitors—to ensure that victory. We who are fighting for victory have an easy conscience and hearts full of hope, for we all know the day is not far distant when everyone will realize who is betraying France and who are her true servants."

Playing on the sentiments of his countrymen and recalling to them better days, he appealed to the spirit of Foch, when broadcasting at Brazzaville on November 11 :

"Marshal Foch, you whose body lies in the vault of the Invalides, but whose spirit still lives on in the minds of all true soldiers of France, to-day, on November 11th, a French soldier comes respectfully to report to you.

"Marshal Foch, you who won the war by sheer determination, must learn that they who were our leaders have given up all hope of victory and ordered us to submit to the enemy.

"Marshal Foch, it was your loyalty as much as your genius that won for you and for us the honour of your being chosen to command the armies of all nations allied to or associated with France. Alas! You must now learn that they who were our leaders ordered us, in the midst of the battle, to betray our Allies.

"Marshal Foch, you always taught and proved that no one has the right to surrender while there is still some means of continuing the

fight. The peoples of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Holland, Norway, and Luxemburg had the courage to understand this, together with all the nations, without exception, whose territories were in enemy hands. It is now my duty to tell you that they who were our leaders have surrendered the sword of France while our country could still call upon an Empire of sixty million men, defended by 500,000 soldiers, a formidable air force, a magnificent fleet still intact, and powerful and resolute Allies.

"Marshal Foch, you who never for a single instant ceased to face north towards the enemy, must know that they who were our leaders are ordering the troops who follow them to turn south in the same direction as the enemy, in order to break down the resistance of Frenchmen who want to fight for France.

"Marshal Foch, it was on November 11th that you placed the crown of victory on the brow of our native land. This year, on November 11th, they who were our leaders have sworn an oath of collaboration with the enemy. But I have other things to report to you besides these infamous deeds, for there are soldiers, there are Frenchmen, who refuse to countenance them—there are Frenchmen, there are soldiers who, for their part, mean to blot them out.

"We, the soldiers of Free France, are these Frenchmen, these soldiers, and, since they who were our leaders have, through panic or despair, failed to do their duty, we have decided, in shame and in sorrow, to recognize them no longer. But we have also decided, Marshal and Immortal

Leader, to follow your example and obey *you*.

"We are following your example, we are carrying out your orders by refusing to lay down our arms and by continuing to fight wherever we can and as best we may, raising ourselves little by little from the abyss of disaster.

"If we are wresting the French Empire bit by bit from the enemy's collaborators in order to keep it for France and find therein means to fight; if we have already brought the Chad back into the war, together with the Cameroons, Ubangi-Shari, the Congo, our colonies in the Pacific and, as recently as yesterday, the Gaboon, it is in order to follow your example and carry out your orders faithfully, united, as you wished all Frenchmen to be, to the Allies who were under your command.

"Little by little, we shall rally all French territories and wield in the war a sword which grows mightier day by day. Through us, our country shall have her share in victory; through us, her honour, her greatness and her happiness will be restored.

"Marshal Foch, we will simply do what you ordered your soldiers to do: we will do our duty. . . ."

And my final quotation is of his appeal given from Cairo, a year after France's surrender.

"On June 17th, 1940, in Bordeaux, the last lawful government of France ceased to exist. A mixed team of defeatists and traitors seized power by a panic-inspired *pronunciamento*. A clique of shady and dishonourable politicians, careerist officials, and incompetent generals rush-

ed headlong to usurp authority and, at the same time, to subscribe to slavery. Taking advantage of the defeat, an old man of eighty-four, a pitiful shell of past glories, was raised to power to endorse the capitulation and dupe the stunned nation.

"On the morrow, Free France was born.

"A year has passed, a year of fighting, tribulation, and hope. Never for a single day have we faltered in our march towards the goal set for us by Duty; to bring France and her Empire into the war again, in order to set our country free and win back liberty for the world. Through our efforts, French forces, French territories, and French ideas have once more started to play a part worthy of our country. By the spirit of courage and self-denial uniting our beloved companions, we have forged for ourselves a fighting weapon which nothing can shatter. Above all, we have rallied France's spirit of resistance and revived the hopes of the vast majority of the nation.

"Doubtless, the road is hard and blood-stained. The enemy knows what a decisive part the recovery of France will play against him in this national, world-wide moral struggle. To prevent this, he has recourse to those very rulers whose lack of honour placed them at his mercy. These men, in order to shield the enemy, not only make use of an abominable system of terrorism and lies borrowed from their masters, but even take advantage of military obligations to set up against us the living barrier of some of their professional troops. A shudder of horror ran through the world at the news that the men of

Vichy were forcing French soldiers in the Empire to fight against us and our Allies in conjunction with German squadrons, with a view to securing a bridgehead in the Levant for the Fuehrer's armies.

"Such a treacherous scheme bears Hitler's own hall-mark. It is typical of his devilish genius to exploit the degradation of others in this war of his. I need hardly say that nothing is better calculated to strengthen the Free French in their determination to wrest their country from his grip and fight with all their might at the side of those who have sworn to wreck his plans. At this very moment, our soldiers, sailors, and airmen are giving glorious proof of this at the gates of Damascus, in Chad Territory, Libya, and Abyssinia, as well as on every sea and in every sky.

"Until victory or death, we shall remain bound in this war of liberation to the splendid British Empire, whose strength and determination are so magnificently personified by Winston Churchill. We shall remain united to all our European Allies whose territories have been overrun but who still fight on with their spirit intact. We shall remain in close association with justice-loving America, who, under the leadership of her great President Roosevelt, has made up her mind to ensure the victory of good over evil. Above all, we shall remain faithful to France, to her honour, her greatness, and her destiny.

"France, with us!"

De Gaulle's appeals were soon answered. Frenchmen, and women also, came from all parts of the world in answer to his call—many took the

risks of escape from France so that by November, 1940, he was able to give the following impressive figures, which were to be doubled a year later.

"We have, at this moment," he declared, "35,000 men under arms, 20 warships in commission, 1,000 airmen, 60 merchantships sailing the seas, many technicians at work in the war factories. . . ."

And not only did Frenchmen travel to Britain but thousands who had to remain where they were in all parts of the world formed Free French Committees, to acknowledge de Gaulle as their leader. Furthermore, important additions were made to his following when the peoples and the administrative officials of the Colonial Federation of the New Hebrides, of Chad, of the mandated territories of the French Cameroons, and of the whole of French Equatorial Africa, as well as of the French settlements in India, New Caledonia and Tahiti, and French possessions in the Pacific announced their break with Vichy. By their action valuable bases were given over to the use of the Allies.

On June 28 the British Government announced its recognition of General de Gaulle as "head of all Free Frenchmen, wherever found, who have rallied round him in defence of the Allied Cause" and on October 27 de Gaulle set up a "French Imperial Defence Council," charged with the task of "directing the French war efforts," and of organizing the loyal territories. This council was recognized on January 6, 1941, when it was given a definite standing by the conclusion of a number of economic, financial and

military agreements.

Nineteen forty-one saw further great progress by the de Gaullists, so that on December 31 de Gaulle was able to state:

"To-day, like all Frenchmen worthy of France, we have but one wish; that the enemy be driven from our land and from all countries engulfed by his tyranny; that he be cast out with the help of our arms and once again in the course of his history suffer the fate of the vanquished! But the present world drama calls for something more than mere aspiration. How do we, for our part, propose to help in achieving this object?

"Apparently, it was once customary in war to conceal one's plans carefully. This may have been wise in the days when politics and strategy were regarded as complicated games which only a few experts could play; but the world war, profoundly affecting the physical and spiritual existence of the nations, rules out such subtleties. Nowadays the most clearly defined policy is the best, just as the simplest and most ruthless form of strategy is the cleverest. Starting on a year of severe trials, but also of tremendous possibilities, we shall not conceal our plans any more than we did in the past, when all seemed lost.

"In this war for France and world freedom, we plan to rebuild the national unity disrupted by invasion and treachery. We mean to free all French territories and citizens from the enemy and the traitors who do his bidding. We aim to bring back into the struggle side by side with our dear and gallant Allies, all the material, spiritual, and moral strength of France and the Empire, so

that our common cause may be brought to a victorious issue.

"We have already achieved this plan in part, and have countless proofs that, either openly or in secret, the French nation rejoices in our success. Essentially because of our action, the flame of hope burns steadily and ever brighter, deep in the hearts of our people, who realise they are at one with the defenders of freedom. As to France's Allies, I believe that their efforts have been directly facilitated by our own. Thus we have already redeemed the honour of our country and rallied her forces in the African lands of Chad Territory, the Cameroons, the Congo, the Gaboon, and Ubangi-Shari. Thus we have been able to proclaim the independence of those noble States, Syria and Lebanon, in virtue of the French mandate, which remains intact, and within its framework. Thus we have taken over on behalf of our country French India, New Caledonia, Tahiti, the French islands in the Pacific and our share in the administration of the New Hebrides. Thus, too, a week ago, we replaced the régime set up by the enemy's collaborators in St. Pierre and Miquelon, where the overwhelming majority of the population enthusiastically voted in our favour. In those islands which through centuries of grim and glorious history have become part of the very substance of France, we have once and for all time restored her sovereign rights, ensuring the reign of law and order and bringing to the people the joys of freedom.

"Thanks to these fragments of the Empire, united in the performance of their national and

international obligations, we are gradually rebuilding the shattered structure of French might and resolution, and are once more making the enemy feel the weight of our arms on land, on sea, and in the air. Day by day is heard in stronger, clearer tones the immortal voice of a France the world cannot afford to lose.

"In the course of the coming year, we shall go steadily forward, relentlessly bent on fulfilling our task. We urge the forty-one million Frenchmen at home and the sixty-four million inhabitants of the Empire to assist us as best they may, whether actively or passively. We fully endorse the words spoken in Ottawa yesterday by that great statesman, Mr. Winston Churchill: 'There is no room now for the dilettante or the weakling, for the shirker or the sluggard.' We believe our plan can serve the common cause and prove useful in the general scheme of Allied policy and action in the war, in which France will play her part.

"Here is our New Year promise: the day will come when the tidal wave of French might will thunder on the shores of Victory."

And now let us turn to the underground struggle in France. Details of the movement are naturally very meagre and we shall have to wait for time to reveal the full story of the fight against the invaders, but we do know now that, despite the appalling collapse throughout the country and the resultant widespread confusion, underground workers in a remarkably short time formed themselves into powerful groups to fight the Germans in a thousand

and one ways. In her book, "France in Torment," Madeleine Gex le Verrier, former manageress of "L'Europe Nouvelle," which tried repeatedly to warn its readers of the true state of affairs in France before the final defeat, speaks of the very early appearance of illegal literature and leaflets in Paris. Many different groups, composed of people of widely divergent points of view, were responsible for these.

One of the leading organizations in underground warfare was the French Communist Party, which as early as July, 1940, published one of the first underground leaflets, concluding with the words:

> "As always, in no matter what circumstances, in these days of harsh trials, horrors and endless calamities, we, Communists, have been and will stay with our people. Their fate is our fate. We believe profoundly in their strength and in their future, in the future of France. Our people will not perish. Their will and their love of liberty will not be beaten down by the evil forces of traitors, exploiters, robbers and conquerors."

Though there were many organizations that did noble work it is to the Communists as a party that we must pay tribute as having been to a large extent the backbone of the resistance movement. Many of their leaders fell victims to the Nazis, prominent among them being Gabriel Peri, one of the Communist deputies, and Pierre Semard, General Secretary of the French Federation of Railwaymen, and noted in international labour circles.

On December 20, 1940, "The Daily Telegraph," stated that:

"......the only Party existing, though illegally, being that of the Communists, and over 1,000 of them were arrested last month. They *are distributing anti-German tracts with a* strong appeal to French patriotic sentiment."

Their organization was excellent, and despite the fierce methods adopted against them by the invaders, and the numbers of Communists executed or thrown into prison, the Party was able to keep going month after month, bolstering up morale for instance by the weekly publication of such papers as "L'Humanité," "La Vie du Ouvriere" and each month "La Vie du Parti," and quarterly "Les Cahiers du Bolshevisme."

No fewer than 10,000 French Communists were shot or died in prison and another 40,000 were gaoled.

Many were the noble deeds performed by these patriots and equally noble was the way they met death. Take for instance Peri and Semard. For months the former lay in prison and great temptations were put before him, to renounce his ideals and join the traitors. But he steadfastly refused and he was finally told that he would be executed. He was completely unafraid and in the last hours fresh temptations were put before him but he remained steadfast to the cause and as he was about to face death, he uttered words that should find a place in the heart of every true Frenchman.

"Let my friends know that I have remained faithful to the ideals of my life," he said.

"Let my compatriots know that I am going to die so that France shall live. I have made a last examination of my conscience. It is positive. It is that I would like you to repeat to all around—I would go the same road if I had my life to live again. . . . I feel myself strong to face death. Farewell, so that France shall live."

Semard was also caught by the Germans and a few minutes before his execution he wrote a letter to French workers and railwaymen in which he said :

"Dear friends, an unexpected occurrence enables me to send you my last word, for in a few seconds I shall be executed. I am awaiting death calmly—I am dying certain of our victory over the Fascists and of the liberation of France. Tell my comrades, railway workers, that I request them not to do anything that can be of service to the Hitlerites. They will understand me and will listen to me; and they will act. I am certain of that. Farewell, dear friends. The hour of my departure into eternity is approaching, but I know that the Hitlerites who will kill me have already been defeated and that France will be able to resume her great struggle. Long live France."

I have already referred to General de Gaulle's early broadcasts. They were not in vain for they and the news put out by the B. B. C. soon became a great source of comfort and inspiration to thousands of Frenchmen, and it was not long before he had a very definite following, prepared to carry out his orders and form into

bodies against the Germans. But many of the de Gaullists found themselves in a somewhat difficult position. They had the utmost faith in their new leader, but also faith in Pétain. As I have pointed out earlier in this chapter, Pétain was put in his job because of the emotional appeal his name would have throughout France and the plan worked for a time; even those who were bitterly opposed to the Germans felt that Pétain could not let his country down and was only playing for time, for the opportunity to come somehow or other to the rescue of France. Therefore for months after the fall his grip on the French remained and he shared the affections of many with de Gaulle, the opinion even being freely expressed that de Gaulle and Pétain had some secret working arrangement with each other.

And now let me give some details of the doings of the men of Vichy during the first year and a half of their rule.

Pétain finally prepared the way, with a broadcast on June 20, for the peace that was to be signed in the forest of Compiègne, the ceremony being carried out on the same spot and in the same railway coach as that in which Marshal Foch handed the Allied armistice terms to the German plenipotentiaries in 1918, Hitler occupying the same seat as that taken by Marshal Foch 22 years before.

Pétain told his countrymen :

"I have asked the enemy to put an end to hostilities. The Government yesterday appointed plenipotentiaries to receive their conditions.

"I took this decision with the stout heart of a soldier because the military situation imposed it. We had hoped to resist on the Somme-Aisne line. General Weygand had regrouped our forces and his name alone presaged victory. The line yielded, however, under the pressure of the enemy, and forced our troops to retreat.

"From June 13 the request for an armistice was inevitable. The blow surprised you, and, remembering 1914-18, you sought the reasons for it. I am going to give you them.

"On May 1, 1917, we still had 3,280,000 men under arms, in spite of three years of murderous fighting. On the eve of the present battle we had 500,000 fewer. In May, 1918, we had 85 British divisions; in May, 1940, we had only 10. In 1918 we had with us 58 Italian divisions and 42 American divisions.

"The inferiority of our material was even greater than that of our effectives. French aviation has fought at odds of one to six. Not so strong as 22 years ago, we had also fewer friends, too few children, too few arms, too few allies. There is the cause of our defeat. The French people do not deny the blow. All peoples have known ups and downs. It is by the way they react that they show themselves to be weak or great. We shall learn a lesson from the battle which has been lost.

"Since victory, the spirit of pleasure has prevailed over the spirit of sacrifice. People have demanded more than they have given. They have wanted to spare themselves effort. To-day misfortunes come. I was with you in the glorious

days. As head of the Government I shall remain with you in the dark days. Stand by me. The fight still goes on. It is for France, the soil of her sons."

Hitler, accompanied by Goering, Hess, von Ribbentrop, Keitel, von Brauchitsch and Raeder (the Navy commander) received on behalf of France General Huntziger, General of Air Bergeret, Admiral Leluc and Léon Noel (former Ambassador to Warsaw).

A preamble to the armistice terms was as follows :

> By order of the Fuehrer and Supreme Commander of the German Forces I have to make the following statement to you :
>
> Relying on the promises of the President of the United States, Wilson, to the Reich Government, promises which were confirmed by the Allied Powers, the German Forces laid down their arms in November, 1918. Thereby a war was ended which the German people and their Government had not desired, and in which, in spite of tremendously superior forces, the enemy had not defeated the German Army, Navy, or Air Force in any decisive action. Already at the very moment of the arrival of the German Armistice delegation, the solemn promises which had been given began to be broken. Thus in this train the long period of suffering began for the German people on Nov. 11, 1918. Whatever could be done to disgrace and humiliate the German people and to inflict mental suffering and material loss upon them was begun here. Breach of solemn

pledges and vows was used against a nation which after an heroic resistance of more than four years succumbed to the sole weakness of believing in the promises of democratic statesmen.

On Sept. 3, 1939, 25 years after the outbreak of the world war, Great Britain and France without any reason again declared war on Germany. Now arms have decided and France is defeated. The French Government have requested the Reich Government to state the conditions for an armistice. The historic forest of Compiègne was chosen for the presentation of these conditions in order to blot out once and for all by this act of justice and restitution a remembrance which represented for France no glorious deed and which the German people felt to be the greatest humiliation of all time. France, after heroic resistance, has been defeated and has collapsed after a unique series of terrible battles. Germany does not therefore propose to give to the terms or negotiations for an armistice the character of insult to so brave an opponent.

The objects of the German demands are: (1) to prevent a resumption of hostilities; (2) to provide all necessary safeguards to Germany for the continuation of the war forced upon her by Great Britain; (3) to create the necessary conditions for a new peace, the basic elements of which shall be reparation of the injustice committed by force against the Reich.

On June 22 the terms for an armistice were officially accepted, Huntziger stating that "at the

request of the French Government and under the compulsion of military events, we are placing our signatures on this document. I wish to express the hope that it will provide the possibility for our two great nations of living and working together in peace,'' to which it is reported Keitel replied: "As a soldier, I have only to say that we know how to honour a defeated, courageous foe." '

Then apparently so as to "blot out" Germany's 1918 defeat Hitler ordered that the railway coach and the "monument to Gallic triumph" (erected at Compiègne after 1918) should be taken to Berlin; the ground ploughed up but the monument to Marshal Foch (erected after the last war) to remain untouched.

The terms of the armistice were as follows:

1. The French Government agrees to cause a cessation of hostilities against Germany in France, in the French colonial possessions, protectorates, and mandated territories, and on the seas.

2. For security of German interests, territory north and west of the following line to be occupied: Geneva-Dole, Chalon-sur-Saone, Paray Le Monial, Moulins, Bourges, Vierzon, thence to 20 kilometres east of Tours, thence south parallel to the Angouleme Railway to Mont de Marsan and St. Jean Pied de Port. The areas not yet occupied in this territory to be occupied immediately on conclusion of the present convention.

3. In the occupied area Germany to have all rights of an occupying power excluding local

administration. The French Government to afford all necessary facilities and "to instruct immediately all French authorities and public offices in the occupied territory to obey all orders of the German Command and to co-operate with them correctly." Germany will reduce to a minimum the occupation of the western coast after the cessation of hostilities with Great Britain. The French Government to be free to choose for themselves the seat of Government in non-occupied territory or even to transfer it to Paris if desired. In the latter event Germany will allow the necessary facilities for administration from Paris of both occupied and unoccupied territory.

4. French naval, military, and air forces to be demobilized and disarmed within a period to be decided, with the exception of troops necessary for maintaining order. The size and armament of the latter to be decided by Germany and Italy respectively. The French armed forces in occupied territory to be brought back into unoccupied territory and demobilized. These troops will previously have laid down their arms and material at the places where they are at the moment of the armistice.

5. As a guarantee Germany may demand surrender in good condition of all artillery, tanks, anti-tank weapons, aircraft, infantry armament, tractors and munitions, in territory not to be occupied. Germany will decide the extent of these deliveries.

6. All arms and war material remaining

in unoccupied territory which are not left for the use of the French authorised forces to be put in store under German or Italian control. The German High Command retains the power to order any measures which might be necessary to prevent unauthorised use of this material. The manufacture of new war material in non-occupied territory to stop immediately.

7. Land and coast defences with armaments, etc, in the occupied territory to be handed over in good condition. All plans of fortifications and particulars of mines, barrages, etc., to be handed over and "all such obstacles must be removed by French forces at the demand of the Germans."

8. The French fleet, except that part left free for the safeguard of French interests in the Colonial Empire, shall be collected in ports to be specified, demobilised and disarmed under German or Italian control; the harbour to which a warship is to return to be determined on the basis of its home port in peace-time. The German Government solemnly declare that they have no intention of using for their own purposes during the war the French Fleet stationed in ports under German control except those units necessary for coast surveillance and mine-sweeping, and further "solemnly and expressly declare that they do not intend to claim the French Fleet on the conclusion of peace." Except for that part (to be determined) of the fleet destined for protection of colonial interests, all ships outside French territorial waters must be recalled to France.

9. All information about naval mines and defences to be furnished. Mine-sweeping to be carried on by the French forces.

10. The French Government not to undertake any hostile action with their remaining armed forces. Members of French forces to be prevented from leaving French soil. No material to be conveyed to Great Britain. No Frenchman to serve against Germany in the service of other Powers.

11. No French merchant shipping to leave harbour, and the handing over in good condition on demand of all seized German merchant ships in French ports. The resumption of commercial traffic to be subject to previous authorisation of the German and Italian Governments. Merchant ships outside France to be recalled or, if not possible, to go to neutral ports.

12. No French aircraft to leave the ground. Aerodromes to be placed under German or Italian control. All foreign aircraft in unoccupied territory to be handed over to the German authorities; "any aircraft taking off without German permission will be regarded by the German Air Force as an enemy and treated as such." The French Government is also required to "make unusable" on demand any aerodrome in unoccupied territory, as well as to "place all foreign aeroplanes in unoccupied territory at Germany's disposal and to prevent them from flying off."

13. All establishments and military tools and stocks in occupied territory to be handed

over intact. Ports, permanent fortifications, naval building yards to be left in their present state and not destroyed or damaged. The same to apply to all means of communication, particularly railways, roads, canals, telephones, telegraphs, navigational and coast lighting marks. Material for repairs to be made available. The French Government also undertake to ensure that "skilled labour, rolling stock, and other means of transport are available in amount corresponding to the normal needs of peace."

14. All wireless transmitting stations in French territory to stop.

15. The French Government to facilitate the transfer of merchandise between Germany and Italy across unoccupied territory.

16. The French Government to repatriate the population to occupied territory.

17. The French Government to prevent the transfer of valuables and stocks from occupied to non-occupied territory or abroad. Supplies in occupied territory to be used only in agreement with the German Government, which "undertakes to take into consideration the vital needs of the population of the unoccupied territory."

18. The cost of maintenance of the German occupying troops to be paid by France.

19. All German prisoners of war and civilians "detained for acts in favour of the German Reich" to be released. The French Government to hand over on demand all Germans named by the German Government resid-

ing in France and in the French Colonial Empire, and to prevent German military and civilian prisoners from being removed from France to French possessions or abroad. Complete lists to be submitted of all prisoners already taken outside France as well as of German war prisoners who are sick and wounded and incapable of being transported.

20. All French prisoners of war in German hands to remain so until the conclusion of peace.

21. Provision for the safeguard of material handed over.

22. The German Armistice Commission will carry out the Armistice and will also co-ordinate it with the Franco-Italian Armistice.

23. The Armistice will enter into force as soon as the French Government have concluded a similar agreement with the Italian Government. Cessation of hostilities to take place six hours after the Italian Government notify its conclusion. The German Government will announce this by wireless.

24. The present Armistice to be valid until the conclusion of a peace treaty and to be denounced at any moment if the French Government do not fulfil their obligations.

Immediately after the armistice world attention turned to the French Colonies. Prominence was given to the position in Syria where despite a declaration on June 24 by M. Puaux, High Commissioner, to the effect that the Commander, General Mittelhauser, was determined to fight on, an announcement came from Beirut four days later

that, in agreement with Puaux, Mittelhauser had decided on a cessation of hostilities in the Levant, although "the French flag will continue to be flown in these territories." Apparently this decision came as a sequel to a message from General Weygand.

On July 1 the British Foreign Office stated that H. M. G. assumed that Mittelhauser's decision did not mean that if Germany or Italy tried to occupy Syria or the Lebanon and "were to try to do so in the face of British command of the sea, no attempt would be made by the French forces to oppose them." H. M. G. went on to declare that "they could not allow Syria or the Lebanon to be occupied by any hostile Power or to be used as a base for attacks upon those countries in the Middle East which they are pledged to defend or to become the scene of such disorder as to constitute a danger to those countries. They therefore hold themselves forced to take whatever measures they may in such circumstances consider necessary in their own interests. Any action which they may hereafter be obliged to take in fulfilment of this declaration will be entirely without prejudice to the future status of the territories now under French Mandate." Unfortunately Britain was forced to take decisive action which led to blody strife not so many months later.

The position in most of the other colonies remained obscure. In Morocco, General Nogues expressed determination not to yield to the enemy and declared that not an inch of French territory could be yielded to the Italians. Similar state-

ments were expressed in Tunisia, Madagascar and Indo-China, but to such little effect as time was to show.

At the end of June the Pétain Government left Bordeaux, first for Clermont-Ferrand, then to establish themselves at Vichy.

Another vitally important question was that of the French Fleet and on July 4 Mr. Churchill, reaffirming Britain's determination to continue the war, made the following statement on the action taken by the Royal Navy to prevent the French Fleet falling into the hands of the enemy. He said:

"It is with sincere sorrow that I must announce to the House the measures which we have felt bound to take in order to prevent the French Fleet from falling into German hands. When two nations are fighting together under long and solemn alliance against the common foe, one of them may be stricken down and overwhelmed and may be forced to ask its ally to release it from its obligations; but the least that could be expected was that the French Government, in abandoning the conflict and leaving its whole weight to fall upon Great Britain and the British Empire, would have been careful not to inflict needless injury upon their faithful comrade in whose final victory the sole chance of French freedom lay and lies.

"As the House will remember, we offered to give full release to the French from their Treaty obligations, although these were designed for precisely the case which arose, on one condition—namely, that the French Fleet should be sailed for

British harbours before the separate armistice negotiations with the enemy were completed. This was not done. On the contrary, in spite of every kind of private and personal promise and assurance given by Admiral Darlan to the First Lord and to his naval colleague, the First Sea Lord of the British Admiralty, an armistice was signed which was bound to place the French Fleet as effectively in the power of Germany and its Italian follower as that portion of the French Fleet was placed in our power when many of them, being unable to reach African ports, came into the harbours of Portsmouth and Plymouth about 10 days ago. Thus I must place on record that what might have been a mortal injury was done to us by the Bordeaux Government with full knowledge of the consequences and of our dangers, and after rejecting all our appeals at the moment when they were abandoning the Alliance and breaking the engagements which fortified it.

"There was another example of this callous, and perhaps even malevolent, treatment which we received, not indeed from the French nation, who have never been, and apparently never are to be, consulted upon these transactions, but from the Bordeaux Government. There were over 400 German air pilots who were prisoners in France: many of them, perhaps most of them, were shot down by the R. A. F. I obtained from M. Reynaud a personal promise that these pilots should be sent for safe keeping to England, and orders were given by him to that effect; but when M. Reynaud fell these pilots were delivered over to Germany, in order, no doubt, to win favour for the Bordeaux

Government with their German masters, and to win it without regard to the injury done to us.

"The German Air Force already feels acutely the shortage of high-grade pilots, and it seemed to me particularly odious that these 400 skilled men should be handed over with the sure knowledge that they would be used to bomb this country and thus force our airmen to shoot them down for the second time. Such wrongful deeds I am sure will not be condoned by history, and I firmly believe that a generation of Frenchmen will arise who will clear their national honour from all countenance of them.

"I said last week that we must now look with particular attention to our own salvation. I have never in my experience seen so grim and sombre a question as what we were to do about the French Fleet discussed in a Cabinet, and it shows how strong were the reasons for the course which we thought it our duty to take that every member of the Cabinet had the same conviction about what should be done, and there was not the slightest hesitation or divergence among them. The three Service Ministers, as well as men like the Minister of Information and the Secretary for the Colonies, particularly noted for their long friendship with France, when they were consulted were equally convinced that no other decision than that which we took was possible. We took that decision, and it was the decision to which with aching hearts but with clear vision we unitedly came.

"Accordingly, early yesterday morning, July 3, after all preparations had been made, we took

the greater part of the French Fleet under our control or else called upon them with adequate force to comply with our requirements. Two battleships, two light cruisers, some submarines, including a very large one, the 'Surcouf', eight destroyers with approximately 200 smaller but extremely useful mine-sweeping and anti-submarine craft, which lay for the most part at Portsmouth and Plymouth, though there were some at Sheerness, were boarded by superior forces after brief notice had been given wherever possible to their captains.

"This operation was successfully carried out without resistance or bloodshed except in one instance. A scuffle arose through a misunderstanding in the submarine 'Surcouf' in which one British seaman was killed and two British officers and one rating wounded. For the rest, the French sailors in the main cheerfully accepted the end of a period of uncertainty.

"A considerable number, 800 or 900, have expressed an ardent desire to continue the war and some have asked for British nationality. This we are ready to grant without prejudice to the other Frenchmen numbered by thousands who prefer to fight on with us as Frenchmen. All the rest of those crews will be immediately repatriated to French ports, if the French Government are able to make arrangements for their reception by permission of their German rulers.

"We are also repatriating all French troops who were in this country, excepting those who of their own free will have volunteered to follow General de Gaulle in the French forces of libera-

tion, of whom he is Chief. Several French submarines have also joined us independently, and we have accepted their services.

"Now I turn to the Mediterranean. At Alexandria, where a strong British battle fleet is lying, there are besides a French battleship, four French cruisers, three of them modern 8 in. gun vessels, and a number of smaller ships. These have been informed that they cannot be permitted to leave harbour and thus fall within the power of the German conquerors of France. Negotiations and discussions have necessarily been taking place, and measures have now been taken to ensure that those ships which are commanded by a very gallant admiral shall be sunk or otherwise made to comply with our wishes.

"The anguish which this process has, naturally, caused to the British and French naval officers concerned may be readily imagined when I tell the House that only this morning in the air raid upon Alexandria by Italian aircraft some of the French ships fired heavily and effectively with us against the common enemy. We shall, of course, offer the fullest facilities to all French officers and men at Alexandria who wish to continue the war, and will provide for them and maintain them during the conflict. We have also promised to repatriate all the rest, and every care in our power will be taken, if they allow it, for their safety and comfort.

"But the most serious part of the story remains. Two of the finest vessels of the French Fleet, the 'Dunkerque' and the 'Strasbourg,' modern battle-cruisers much superior to the

'Scharnhorst' and the 'Gneisenau,' lay with two battleships, several light cruisers, and a number of destroyers and submarines and other vessels at Oran and at its adjacent military port of Mars-El-Kebir on the northern African shore of Morocco.

"Yesterday morning a carefully chosen British officer, Captain Holland, lately Naval Attaché in Paris, sent on in a destroyer, waited upon the French Admiral Gensoul. After being refused an interview, he presented the following document which I will read to the House. The first two paragraphs of the document deal with the general question of the Armistice which I have already explained in my own words. The fourth paragraph, which begins as follows, is the operative paragraph :

" 'It is impossible for us, your comrades up to now, to allow your fine ships to fall into the power of the German or Italian enemy. We are determined to fight on to the end, and if we win, as we think we shall, we shall never forget that France was our ally, that our interests are the same as hers, and that our common enemy is Germany. Should we conquer, we solemnly declare that we shall restore the greatness and territory of France. For this purpose we must make sure that the best ships of the French Navy are not used against us by the common foe.

'In these circumstances H. M. Government has instructed me (that is, the British Admiral) to demand that the French Fleet now at Mars-el-Kebir and Oran shall act in accordance with one of the following alternatives :

'(*a*) Sail with us and continue to fight for victory against the Germans and Italians.

'(*b*) Sail with reduced crews under our control to a British port. The reduced crews will be repatriated at the earliest moment. If either of these courses is adopted by you we will restore your ships to France at the conclusion of the war, or pay full compensation if they are damaged meanwhile.

'(*c*) Alternatively, if you feel bound to stipulate that your ships should not be used against the Germans or Italians, unless these break the armistice, then sail them with us with reduced crews to some French port in the West Indies, Martinique for instance, where they can be demilitarised or be perhaps entrusted to the United States and remain safe until the end of the war, the crews being repatriated.

'If you refuse these fair offers I must with profound regret require you to sink your ships within six hours.

'Finally, failing the above, I have the order from H. M. Government to use whatever force may be necessary to prevent your ships from falling into German or Italian hands.'

"We had hoped that one or other of the alternatives which we presented would have been accepted without the necessity of using the terrible force of a British battle squadron. Such a squadron arrived before Oran two hours after Captain Holland and his destroyer. It was commanded by Vice-Admiral Somerville, an officer who distinguished himself lately in bringing off over 100,000 Frenchmen during the evacuation from

Dunkirk. Admiral Somerville was further provided with a cruiser force and strong flotillas.

"All day the parleys continued, and we hoped until the afternoon that our terms would be accepted without bloodshed. However, no doubt in obedience to the orders dictated by the Germans from Wiesbaden, where the Franco-German Armistice Commission is in session, Admiral Gensoul refused to comply and announced his intention of fighting. Admiral Somerville was therefore ordered to complete his mission before darkness fell and at 5-53 p.m. he opened fire upon this powerful French Fleet which was also protected by its shore batteries. At 6 p.m. he reported that he was heavily engaged. The action lasted for some 10 minutes and was followed by heavy attacks from our naval aircraft, carried in the 'Ark Royal'.

"At 7-20 Admiral Somerville forwarded a further report, which stated that a battle cruiser of the 'Strasbourg' class was damaged and ashore, and that a battleship of the 'Bretagne' class had been sunk, that another of the same class had been heavily damaged, that two French destroyers and a seaplane carrier—'Commandant Teste'—were also sunk or burned. While this melancholy action was being fought either the battle cruiser 'Strasbourg' or the 'Dunkerque', one or the other, managed to slip out of harbour in a gallant effort to reach Toulon or a North African port and place herself under German control in accordance with the Armistice terms of the Bordeaux Government—though all this her crew and captain may not have realised.

"She was pursued by aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm and hit by at least one torpedo. She may have been joined by other French vessels from Algiers who were well placed to do so, and to reach Toulon before we could overtake them. She will at any rate be out of action for many months to come.

"I need hardly say that the French ships fought, albeit in this unnatural cause, with the characteristic courage of the French Navy, and every allowance must be made for Admiral Gensoul and his officers who felt themselves obliged to obey the orders they received from their Government and could not look behind that Government to see German dictation. I fear the loss of life among the French and in the harbour must have been heavy, as we were compelled to use a severe measure of force and several immense explosions were heard.

"None of the British ships taking part in the action was in any way affected in gun power or mobility by the heavy fire directed upon them. I have not yet received any reports of our casualties, but Admiral Somerville's Fleet is in all military respects intact and ready for further action. The Italian Navy, for whose reception we had also made arrangements and which is, of course, considerably stronger numerically than the Fleet we used at Oran, kept prudently out of the way. However, we trust that their turn will come during the operations which we shall pursue to secure the effectual command of the Mediterranean.

"A large portion of the French Fleet has therefore passed into our hands or has been put

out of action, or otherwise withheld from Germany by yesterday's events. The House will not expect me to say anything about other French ships which are at large except this, that it is our inflexible resolve to do everything that is possible in order to prevent them falling into the German grip. I leave the judgment of our actions with confidence to Parliament. I leave it to the nation, and I leave it to the United States. I leave it to the world and to history. Now I turn to the immediate future. We must of course expect to be attacked or even invaded, if that proves to be possible—it has not been proved yet—in our own island, before very long. We are making every preparation in our power to repel the assaults of the enemy whether they be directed upon Great Britain or upon Ireland, which all Irishmen, without distinction of creed or party, should realise is in imminent danger. These again are matters upon which we have clear views. These preparations are constantly occupying our toil from morn to night and far into the night. But although we have clear views on them it would not, I think, be profitable for us to discuss them in public or even, so far as the Government is concerned, except under very considerable reserve, in private session.

"I call upon all subjects of His Majesty and upon our Allies and well-wishers all over the world, on both sides of the Atlantic, to give us their utmost aid. In the fullest harmony with our Dominions we are moving through a period of extreme danger and of splendid hope when every virtue of our race will be tested and all that

we have and are will be freely staked. This is no time for doubt or weakness. This is the supreme hour to which we have been called."

The immediate reactions to Britain's action was naturally one of fury in Germany while the Pétain Government ordered French warships in Alexandria to proceed to sea, using force if necessary (this was not complied with); French warships on the high seas received orders to intercept any British merchant shipping that they might meet and to answer all further attacks by fire.

Events were moving fast at Vichy where the collaborationists were getting down to work. First it was decided to confer full powers on the government under Pétain. M. Herriot, presiding over the Chamber of Deputies, stated that Parliament could therefore not use its essential power (that of overthrowing Cabinets); that the Government would no longer be responsible to Parliament; and that the legislative power would be vested in two chambers, one of a political character and the other representing occupational interests.

Special attention, it was pointed out, was to be paid to the education of youth and a social charter would be created governing relations between employers and workers.

On July 7 it was announced the French subjects serving with the British forces were liable to penalties ranging from hard labour to the death penalty; de Gaulle was sentenced by a Toulouse military court *in absentia* to four years' imprisonment for "refusing orders to return to

France" and also for "inciting soldiers to disobey." Other similar sentences were imposed on a number of military and naval leaders who had joined de Gaulle and also on prominent public figures, including several journalists. Vichy also broke off diplomatic relations with Britain.

Further news about the situation in Syria was forthcoming on July 10 when it was stated that many high French officers had left the country, mainly for Palestine.

There were fresh protests from Vichy when it was made known that action had been taken at Dakar (Senegal) against the newly-completed French battleship "Richelieu" to prevent her falling into enemy hands. It had been suggested to her commander that (*a*) she should be sailed to a British port and returned to France after the war; (*b*) that she should sail to a French West Indies port, to be demilitarized or entrusted to the U. S. A. for safe keeping; (*c*) that she be demilitarized at Dakar; or (*d*) that she should be sunk. As no satisfactory reply was forthcoming, a ship's boat in charge of a British officer passed the boom defences and dropped depth charges under her stern, damaging the vessel, and then planes of the Fleet Air Arm attacked her with torpedoes.

It was also reported about the same time that an agreement had been reached between the British and French naval authorities at Alexandria for the demilitarization of French warships at that port. The ships it was decided would be placed in a condition in which they could not go to sea, certain portions of their armament would

be taken ashore and placed in charge of the French authorities there, the crews reduced and those seamen not required repatriated to France.

It was not long before the men of Vichy came out in their true colours when on July 12, after a broadcast by Pétain in which he appealed for support for the new constitution and at the same time attacked "international Socialism" and "international Capitalism," it was announced that he had been made President and Prime Minister, with the title of Chief of the French State, in succession to M. Lebrun. He had assumed full governmental powers and could appoint and dismiss Ministers and Secretaries of State, who were responsible only to him. Numerous other powers were given to him, amongst which was the exercise of legislative power in the council of ministers until the formation of new Assemblies; power to promulgate laws and ensure their execution; to make appointments to all civilian and military posts which were not otherwise provided for by law; he would also continue to be in control of the army.

The Cabinet handed its collective resignation to Pétain and the new Cabinet included Laval (who as already stated had been temporarily eclipsed but was now fully in the limelight). Invested in him was the position of successor to Pétain should the latter not be in a position to take up his functions before the ratification of the new Constitution.

The assumption of dictatorial powers by the Marshal evolved considerable derision from the conquerors, German papers commenting that

"France must bear full responsibility for her mistakes and crimes—Germany has won pre-eminence in Europe. A France may exist alongside her, but not the France of yesterday, which has been defeated and which must now be satisfied with the role assigned her by Germany", or again—"France will not be able to emerge from disaster by imitating the successful system of government of her adversaries. The names of the men of Vichy are not unknown and not new. They are the same old democrats, attempting to give France a totalitarian government." The German wireless called Laval "the friend of the Jews" and also said—"It cannot be expected that this outfit of men will inaugurate a new epoch for France. The world has nothing to expect from senile France". In Italy similar comments were made.

Towards the end of July first mention was made of the farcical trial that was afterwards to run its weary course at Riom, a small town near Clermont-Ferrand.

It was announced in Vichy that the responsibility of M. Daladier and three of his Ministers (MM. Delbos, Mandel, and Campinchi) for the declaration of war against Germany would be judged by a special court to be set up, and that three other former Ministers and a deputy would be tried by court-martial on charges of deserting their posts, the individuals concerned being M. Jean Zay (formerly Minister of Education), M. Paul Viennot (formerly Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs), M. Mendes-France (an Under-Secretary in the Blum Government), and M.

Wiltzer, a deputy; it was alleged that they had left Bordeaux for Casablanca on June 20 without authority. The names of MM. Blum, Cot, La Chambre, and General Gamelin were also mentioned on July 30 as amongst those who would be tried.

A Supreme Court to carry out the trials, whose terms of reference would be "to seek out and to try all persons having committed crimes or offences or who failed in their duty in acts concerning the transition from a state of peace to a state of war", was set up by Cabinet decree on July 29. Its composition was announced on August 2 as follows: M. Caours (President of the Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation), chairman, M. Legarde, Admiral Herr, M. Tanon, M. Watteau, M. Ripert (*doyen* of the Paris Bar), and M. Benoist. Several of its members are understood to have evinced Fascist sympathies in the past, notably M. Ripert and M. Watteau, who was associated with the *Cagoulard* movement. On August 6 it was announced that the scope of the Court would be widened to investigate charges alleging the bringing of influence to bear on French public opinion through the press in favour of action against Germany. The Court was formally installed on August 8 at Riom.

Of the accused, M. Daladier was stated to be held *incommunicado* in a Marseilles hotel, M. Mandel was put under arrest in French Morocco and brought to France, MM. Campinchi and Delbos were detained in North Africa, M. Cot was stated to be in London, and M. La Chambre

in the U. S. A. It was reported that M. Reynaud, who was in Vichy, would also be called before the Court.

M. Mandel, the former Colonial Minister, was charged *inter alia* with attempting to communicate with Lord Gort and Mr. Duff Cooper at Casablanca. An official statement published in London on July 29 with reference to this said :

"Hearing that certain distinguished French statesmen were in North Africa, Mr. Duff Cooper, who knew them personally, flew to North Africa with the approval of the Government. Mr. Duff Cooper was accompanied by Lord Gort. They went in order to get into touch with the French statesmen. When, however, they arrived the local authorities made it clear that it would be unwelcome to them if they were to get into touch with the statesmen, and consequently they left North Africa the following day. They did not in fact establish any communication with M. Mandel or any of the Ministers in question."

The French war "ace", Major Réné Fock, was commissioned by the French Government to prepare a memorandum on the causes of the numerical weakness of the French Air Force for submission to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court at Riom was called on August 13 to hear a formal indictment of former military and political leaders accused of leading the Third Republic into a disastrous war with Germany. Those indicted were not specifically named but grouped together as a composite "Monsieur X" ; individual responsibility would be fixed by the Court. The indictment, read by

the Public Prosecutor, said: "Crimes and offences have been committed by Ministers, ex-Ministers, and their immediate subordinates in the exercise of their functions. They betrayed the duties and charges in their keeping by acts that contributed to the passage from peace to a state of war and by acts that later aggravated the consequences of the situation thus created." These acts, the Prosecutor asserted, constituted "attempts against the security of the State" and were "committed by persons whose identity will be determined in the investigations of the Court." The indictment concluded with a demand for summary procedure against "Monsieur X"—"the authors, co-authors and accomplices in the aforementioned acts." After hearing the indictment the Court appointed its Vice-President, M. Henri Legarde (former Counsellor of the Court of Cassation) assisted by MM Tanon and BaraVeau, to conduct the investigations; M. Caours, President of the Supreme Court, would have direct charge of the trials.

On September 9 it was reported that General Gamelin and MM. Daladier and Reynaud had been arrested and incarcerated in the Chateau de Chazeron.

The "Journal Officiel" published a decree-law on September 18 under which individuals judged "dangerous to public security and national defence" might, on the initiative of local Prefects, and with the approval of the Government, be "administratively interned" in special establishments designated by the Minister of the Interior. The publication of this law was imme-

diately followed by the "administrative internment" of M. Leon Blum, the Socialist leader, and M. Montel, a deputy and friend of M. Blum, in the Chateau de Chazeron.

On September 25 it was announced from Vichy that the jurisdiction of the Riom Court would be extended to consider not only persons charged under the terms of the indictment of August 13, but also to investigate cases of Ministers, ex-Ministers, and their subordinates who had "maladministered public funds, failed in their duty, and speculated."

On September 26 MM. Marx-Dormoy (Minister of the Interior under MM. Blum and Chautemps), Vincent-Auriol (Minister of Finance and Foreign Affairs in *Front Populaire* Governments), Jules Moch (Under-Secretary in *Front Populaire* Cabinets) and Salomon Grumbach (a former Vice-President of the Foreign Affairs Commission), were reported to be "administratively interned" at Pellevoison (Indre). M. Pomaret, former Minister of the Interior, was similarly incarcerated at Pellevoison on October 2.

Warrants were issued on September 6 for the arrest of MM. Pierre Cot and Guy La Chambre, former Air Ministers, who were in the United States. M. La Chambre arrived in France on September 20 and gave himself up to the judicial authorities. On October 1 the Government ordered the confiscation of the property and fortune of M. Cot.

M. Jean Zay, former Minister of Education, who had been tried by a military court at Clermont-Ferrand with desertion, was sentenced on

October 4 to deportation and military degradation.

The Government decided on September 25 to create a Court-martial under a President and four judges which, independently of the competence of the Supreme Court at Riom, might pronounce sentences of imprisonment and even the death penalty; there would be no appeal from its judgment and sentence would be carried out within 24 hours. The function of this body would be the punishment of crimes "threatening the unity and security of the State" in cases which, by reason of their nature, did not need lengthy investigation.

On October 19 the Riom Court was asked by the Public Prosecutor to indict M. Blum on a charge of betrayal of duty, and open its investigations against M. Mandel on charges of corruption and against M. Reynaud and two of his secretaries on charges of embezzlement of public funds.

At the same time it was announced that M. Herriot had been placed under protective custody. In the succeeding months evidence was being prepared but unexpectedly on March 20, 1941, it was announced at Vichy that MM. Vincent-Auriol, Grumbach and Montet had been freed from "administrative internment" and on April 1 that MM. Daladier and Reynaud had been released from prison and were under house arrest.

On August 14 it was officially announced in Vichy that the Marshal would be the supreme and sole judge of Daladier, Blum, Cot, La Chambre and Mandel, arrogating to himself the right to order any or all of the following

penalties: fines, loss of civic rights, obligatory residence under police supervision in France or the colonies, administrative internment, or detention in a fortress, the accused having no rights of appeal. It was explained at the same time that Pétain's powers did not imply that his decision would overrule those of the Riom Court, but that he would take "speedy sanctions" while awaiting final judgment of the court.

The Vichy Cabinet, meeting on September 7, decided to create a *Cour de Justice* to replace the Riom Court, which would recommend to Pétain penalties for Daladier, Reynaud, Blum and also for Gamelin, the sentences to be pronounced by Pétain himself.

Marshal Pétain announced on October 16 a broadcast his sentences on the six former French political and military leaders charged with the responsibility for France's defeat. "The Council of Political Justice," the Marshal said, "has unanimously decided that Daladier, Blum and Gen. Gamelin should be detained in a fortified place. I therefore order the detention of these three persons at Fort Portalet (Basses Pyrenees). Regarding Reynaud and Mandel, who have been the object of a preliminary investigation before the Riom Court, I have decided, on the recommendation of the majority of the members of the Council of Political Justice, that the serious evidence against them justifies their detention in a fortress. I have ordered this step. With regard to Guy La Chambre and Jacomet, whose responsibility appears to have been less serious, the Council's opinion was different. These two

men will therefore remain interned at Bourrassol. The Council of Political Justice has asked me to keep the judicial issue separate from the political issue. The Riom Court will therefore continue its proceedings. The national interest demands that this Court should judge the case in the shortest possible time. The gravity of the charges against the persons chiefly responsible for our disaster is so evident that it cannot be disguised or hidden by simple political sanctions. The country, which has felt itself betrayed, has a right to the whole truth. The sentences which will conclude the Riom trial must be pronounced in broad daylight. They will strike at persons and also at methods, customs and the regime. There will be no appeal against this." Marshal Pétain then announced that the proceedings before the Riom Court were about to start and said that whilst he was fully aware of the danger connected with this great trial during a troubled period, he had weighed the advantages and disadvantages from the point of view of the nation, and had made this decision.

Subsequently the following charges against the accused leaders were published:

M. Daladier—Under his Government France entered the war without adequate preparation. The National Defence Council was not consulted, as it should have been, on questions concerning war preparations. The national mobilisation, industrial preparation and the establishment of frontier fortifications revealed grave deficiencies. Daladier had been accessible to political influences. Numerous planes were handed over to

the Spanish Popular Front with the result that France was short of them. The Government increased the danger of invasion by allowing hundreds of thousands of Spanish agitators to enter French territory. Moreover Daladier showed weakness towards labour agitation.

Gen. Gamelin—Through lack of energy and weakness of character Gen. Gamelin permitted an aggravation of the bad condition of France's military preparations. During the war he disorganised the Command by disastrous decisions. Through the material and moral inferiority into which he allowed the army to relapse, he caused the troops to be engaged in decisive operations badly instructed and badly armed.

M. Blum—During his tenure of office M. Blum was informed of the grave deficiencies in the national defence. He therefore neglected his duties by not giving to the country the armaments on which its security depended. Moreover, by nationalising the war industries he disorganised production. Under his administration, labour reforms lost their true character and were deprived of their moral aims by becoming merely instruments of the social conflict.

M. Guy La Chambre—Whilst he was Air Minister he rendered excellent plans inoperative through his weaknesses and showed himself incapable of resisting the pressure of his political friends; he also adopted lamentable subterfuges to conceal the effect of his negligence.

M. Jacomet—As Controller of Armaments he was guilty of negligence in the industrial preparedness of the country.

But it was finally announced on October 26 that the opening of the Riom trial had been postponed till the beginning of 1942, the reason given being that 650 witnesses from all over the world would be required to appear.

Thus we leave the trial for the present, to take up the story of its rumbling progress in another volume.

And to return to the general story of Vichy France—at the beginning of August, 1940, a number of French citizens who had fled abroad were denationalized and their property was confiscated, including Baron de Rothschild and the journalists M. Henri de Kerillis, M. Andre Geraud ("Pertinax") and Madame Genevieve Tabouis.

About the same time there was a decree which made all French soldiers enrolling in a foreign army or enlisting for service with a foreign power liable to the death penalty; incidentally on August 2 de Gaulle again came up for trial! This time he was sentenced to death *in absentia* by a military court on charges of "treason" and "desertion to a foreign country."

Pétain, who had been forced to admit in a broadcast given in the middle of August that his government had appealed in vain to the Germans for permission to return to Paris and Versailles, claimed in another a few weeks later that the new régime was "national in foreign policy, hierarchical in internal policy, co-ordinated and controlled in its economy, and social in its spirit and institutions." He also claimed that the government had lost "neither their independence of speech nor their care for the interests of the

country." He stated that "3,000,000 refugees and 2,000,000 demobilized soldiers have returned to their homes."

Despite Pétain's assurances, Vichy was being made to toe the line by the conquerors, for on October 18 a statute was issued by the French Government defining the status of Jews. These unfortunates were defined as persons whose ancestry included three grandparents of Jewish race or two grandparents of the same race if the wedded partner was a Jew or Jewess. All Jews were banned from administrative and governmental posts, from the teaching profession, from the armed services, and from executive positions in enterprises in receipt of State subsidies, the only exception being for those Jews who fought in the last war, or were mentioned in despatches in the present. Admissions were however permitted to the learned professions on a basis proportionate to their numbers in the population. But Jews were banned absolutely from the following positions: editors of newspapers and other publications, directors of film companies, all leading positions on the stage and radio. No Jew might belong to executive bodies representing the learned and other professions.

Towards the end of October it was announced that Hitler had met Laval and also Pétain; incidentally the Fuehrer met Franco on the Spanish frontier. It was stated that the Hitler-Pétain interview had taken place "in an atmosphere of great courtesy" and the "'two chiefs proceeded to a general examination and in particular to the means of reconstructing peace in Europe."

A few days later Pétain stated over the radio:

"A few days ago I had a meeting with the Chancellor of the Reich. This meeting raised hopes and provoked anxiety. I owe you an explanation. Such an interview, four months after our military defeat, was only possible thanks to the dignity of the French people in their misfortune and thanks to the enormous efforts at regeneration they have made. It was only possible thanks to the heroism of our sailors, the energy of our Colonial leaders, and the loyalty of the native populations. This first meeting between victor and vanquished signifies the first rehabilitation of our country. Of my own free will I accepted the Fuehrer's invitation. I did not submit to any *Diktat* or any pressure from him. Collaboration between our two countries was examined. I accepted its principles. Its application will be discussed later.

"To all those who await the salvation of France, I wish to say that this salvation is first of all in our own hands. To those who, through certain sincere scruples, do not share our opinion, I wish to say that the first duty of every Frenchman is to have confidence. Those who doubt and who harden their hearts I would remind that the most praiseworthy reserve and pride, if persisted in to excess, are in danger of becoming worthless. I, who have taken in hand the destiny of France, have the duty of creating the most favourable atmosphere for safeguarding the interests of the country. It is with honour and to maintain French unity, the unity of ten centuries, within

the framework of the constructive activity of a new European order, that I enter to-day the path of collaboration. Thus, in the near future, the burden of suffering on our country will be lightened, the lot of our prisoners improved, the burden of the costs of occupation lessened, the line of demarcation made more flexible and the provisioning of the territory facilitated.

"This collaboration must be sincere. All thought of aggression must be excluded from it. It must conform to a patient and deliberate effort. An armistice, after all, is not peace. France has many obligations towards the victor. In any case, she remains sovereign. This sovereignty imposes on her the obligation to defend her soil. To erase divergencies of opinion, to suppress Colonial dissensions—this is my policy. The Ministers are responsible to me and me alone. History will judge. Until now I have spoken to you as a father—to-day I speak as a leader. Follow me. Keep your trust in eternal France."

Laval was called to Paris at the beginning of November where he met Goering and after the interview warned the French press to make greater efforts towards collaboration. M. Flandin also joined in the chorus, urging "sincere and loyal collaboration" with Germany in the "new European order." At that time Germany was engaged in the wholesale expulsion of French-speaking people from Lorraine while the students of Paris showed their resentment against the general state of affairs and a number were shot by the Germans in consequence.

Then came the big surprise in mid-Decem-

ber—Laval was dismissed by Pétain. In a broadcast on the 15th to the French nation the Marshal announced Laval's dismissal from his cabinet and his replacement by M. Flandin as Foreign Minister, as follows:

"I have just taken a decision which I trust is in the interest of the nation. M. Pierre Laval is no longer a member of the government. M. Pierre-Etienne Flandin has taken the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. The Constitutional Act which nominated my successor (Laval) is cancelled. It is for high reasons of internal policy that I have taken this decision. It has no repercussions at all on our relations with Germany. I remain at the helm. The national revolution continues."

Pétain was reported to have told Hitler that Flandin seemed to him better able to pursue a policy of *rapprochement* between Germany and France with the support of public opinion.

Thus Flandin of pro-German sympathies, who visited Berlin in 1937 and sent a message of congratulation to Hitler in connection with the Munich Agreement in 1938, came into his own, but only temporarily.

There was great excitement at Vichy following Laval's dismissal and a spate of rumours. It was said that he was preparing a *coup* with German connivance under which Germany would gain complete control of Unoccupied France. Abetz, the German representative in Paris, paid a hurried visit to Vichy, where it was suggested heavy demands were being made by the Nazis for the right of German troops to pass through

Unoccupied France to the Mediterranean and the use of the French Fleet.

Laval had been put under detention but he was soon released and he scuttled off to Paris to be under the protection of his German friends. A few days later Admiral Darlan (Minister of Marine) also went to Paris to have conversations with Abetz.

Much was happening behind the scenes but little came into the open until on January 19 when it was officially announced that following a long conversation between Pétain and Laval there had been a reconciliation and all "misunderstandings" had been dissipated. No further official indication was given as to the true implications of this "reconciliation". A few days later the Havas Agency said that there would be no departure in French policy, either internally or externally. Laval returned to Paris after the meeting which had taken place at a point on the border of occupied and unoccupied territories.

France's plight was reflected in the repressive measures taken by the Germans early in 1941—such as purges in Alsace-Lorraine and high collective fines on towns and cities. From mid-January the German-controlled Paris press and radio carried on an intensive campaign against Vichy, mainly on behalf of Laval. The renegade Marcel Deat, as editor of "L'Oeuvre", came into prominence in this connection.

Then it became known that Laval had declined a seat in the cabinet as Minister of State and a member of the Directing Committee. What Laval wanted was apparently to become

head of the government with powers that would make the Chief of State no more than a figure-head.

Events were again moving fast at Vichy for on February 7 it was announced that Flandin had resigned and now Darlan had come into his own as Vice-Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Pétain signed a new constitutional act nominating Darlan as his eventual successor as Head of the State. A few days later the Admiral also became Minister of the Interior.

On assuming his new powers, Darlan's first utterance was a threat against Britain, when he told American press correspondents on March 10, in connection with the British blockade of French ports: "If the British continue this blockade, which I consider absurd, I shall be obliged to ask authority to furnish arms and protection for our merchant ships. I will let nothing stand in the way of the feeding of the French peoples. Actually the Germans are more generous and show a wider humanity than the English."

It was officially announced in Vichy on May 7 that an agreement had been signed the previous day in Paris by Darlan and Abetz under which the Reich made the following "concessions" to France: (1) opening of the border between the Occupied and Unoccupied Zones for the passage of foodstuffs, coal, and other merchandise into Vichy Government's territory; (2) an "envisaged" reduction of the costs of the German Army of Occupation, from 400,000,000 fr. to 300,000,000 fr.; and (3) some relaxation of the

restrictions on correspondence between the two zones allowing postcards to be used instead of the former printed cards; in cases of sickness or death permits might also be granted to relatives to cross the border. No mention was made of any parallel French "concessions" to Germany, though the possibility of such was widely commented on in the foreign press, which stressed in particular the role which the French Fleet and Syria might play in any moves for active French-German "collaboration". A Vichy spokesman declared on May 8 that the negotiations, "carried out in a spirit of mutual understanding", had been necessitated by the prolongation of the war.

Prior to the signing of the agreement Admiral Darlan had paid a number of visits to Paris, where he saw Abetz and Laval, and he also met Rudolf Hess, the German Deputy-Fuehrer, at Beauvais at the end of April. On May 12 Darlan saw Hitler and Ribbentrop at Berchtesgaden, the subject-matter of the conversations not being disclosed, and had an interview with Abetz in Paris on May 13 before returning to Vichy.

The following communiqué was issued in Vichy on May 14: "The Cabinet met under the presidency of Marshal Pétain. It heard a report from Admiral Darlan on the Franco-German negotiations. It unanimously approved their terms. The effect of these negotiations will soon be felt."

The next big event to occupy Vichy's attention was British action in Syria, but that will be dealt with in Chapter III.

August saw fresh attempts being made in Paris for closer collaboration between Vichy and Germany and also fresh powers for Darlan. He was made Minister of National Defence and he had in fact virtual control of French military and foreign policy. A number of measures of a very repressive nature were also announced and these gave the signal for a great wave of unrest throughout France. Thousands of arrests were made, many patriots were killed and the iniquitous system of collecting "hostages" was soon in full swing. Germany had attacked Russia two months before and the excuse was made also to declare war on all those who had supported Communism in France. Many were the patriots who were shot down during this bloody period and many were the great acts of heroism on the part of freedom-loving Frenchmen. "France", the Free French organ in London, gave the following figures of arrests—in Paris, 11,000; interned in concentration camps, 9,000; soldiers of Allied armies, 5,000; supporters of the former Parliamentary régime (in both zones) 10,000; Frenchmen attempting to join the Free French and British armies, 25,000—a total of 60,000, exclusive of 90,000 Jews, Spanish and other refugees in internment and labour camps.

The outstanding incident during that period was on August 27 during a ceremony at Versailles, of presenting colours to members of the Fascist Legion proceeding to the Eastern Front. Laval and Deat were shot at and wounded by a 29-year-old Frenchman who stepped out of the ranks. He was at first stated to be a Communist,

then a former de Gaullist, who had joined the Legion "with the object of killing someone."

At this time Pétain announced that the Senate and Chamber would leave Vichy for Chatel-Guyon, a mountain resort near Riom. This led to protests, it being pointed out that the Constitution of 1875 laid down that Parliament should function in the same town as government. These protests were ignored.

In the months to follow, till the end of 1941, the world was shocked by the desperate measures employed by the Germans to keep France down. Many who might have done so much for a new France that we are now seeing taking shape were executed. They went to their deaths bravely (I have already referred to Peri and Semard) but the untold misery of France in the last months of 1941 cannot be adequately described. Shooting, fines, collection of hostages were the order of the day. France was roused but was being crushed under the heel of modern barbarism.

CHAPTER II

THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

"THE news from France is very bad, and I grieve for the gallant French people who have fallen into this terrible misfortune. Nothing will alter our feelings towards them, or our faith that the genius of France will rise again. What has happened in France makes no difference to British faith and purpose. We have become the sole champions now in arms to defend the world cause. We shall do our best to be worthy of that high honour. We shall defend our island, and, with the British Empire around us, we shall fight on unconquerable until the curse of Hitler is lifted from the brows of men. We are sure that in the end all will be well."

These words were uttered by Winston Churchill on the evening of June 17th, 1940, when news from France—that Marshal Pétain had been called upon to form a new Cabinet—put beyond all doubt the fact that Hitler had the Western European Continent at his mercy. Thus began an outstanding chapter in the history of the British Empire, but a chapter that was not without many flaws, the greatest being the unsolved Indian deadlock, which remains to this day, and which, if it had been settled in 1940,

would have had such a tremendous effect, not only on the holocaust that was to spread over the Far East and then on to Burma the following year, but also to a great extent on the weary struggle in North Africa. With India, under the leadership of her anti-Fascist patriots, given a chance fully to industrialize herself; with India 100 per cent in the war with men, arms and material, so much different might the course of this war have been, but that was not to be, and the odds seemed very much in the favour of the Fascist Powers when France fell. Churchill's India policy has always shown great lack of understanding; he called upon not only Britain but the Empire as well to stand up to the then apparently overwhelming menace, but there lay within that Empire vast, untapped resources that, given the proper chance, would have contributed much towards the fight against Fascism.

But so far as Britain herself was concerned, Churchill was the one and only man to rouse the country sufficiently to oppose Hitler and in the weeks and months that were to follow that fateful June, by his example, his organizing power and his oratory, he was effectively to outwit Nazism and rouse sufficient enthusiasm and win a gallant response from the British people to be victorious in what is known as "The Battle of Britain."

From the start of his career as Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill adopted the sound policy, so far as security would allow, of taking the people of Britain into his confidence and giving them from time to time in the course of broadcasts, and

speeches in the House of Commons, straightforward accounts of the war situation. He did not hide the fact that the situation was desperately bad—Britain had already lost much as a result of the disaster in France; she was ill-prepared for the fight ahead, but he called upon the people to present a united front with what weapons they had, make up for lost time in the factories and workshops, and be ever ready to face an invasion, in whatever form it took, with what resources they possessed. For instance in one of his early broadcasts he declared :

"Should the invader come there will be no lying down of the people in submission as we have seen in other countries. We shall defend every village, town and city. The vast mass of London itself, fought street by street, could easily devour an entire hostile army, and we would see London laid in ruins and ashes rather than that it should be tamely and abjectly enslaved."

He therefore made no bones about the situation when he gave his statement in the House of Commons on June 18th on the French request for an armistice.

In the course of it, he stated :

"The military events which have happened during the past fortnight have not come to me with any sense of surprise. Indeed, I indicated a fortnight ago to the House that the worst possibilities were open, and I made it perfectly clear then that whatever happened in France would make no difference to the resolve of Britain and the Empire to fight on if necessary for years, if

necessary alone.

"During the last few days we have successfully brought off the great majority of the troops we had in France—a very large number, scores of thousands, and seven-eighths of the troops we have sent to France since the beginning of the war; that is to say, about 350,000 out of 400,000 men are safely back in this country. Others are still fighting with the French, and fighting with considerable success in their local encounters with the enemy.

"We have also brought back a great mass of stores, rifles, and munitions of all kinds which have been accumulating in France during the last nine months. We have, therefore, in this island to-day a very large and powerful military force. This force includes all our best-trained and finest troops, and includes scores of thousands of those who have already measured their quality against the Germans and found themselves at no disadvantage.

"We have under arms at the present time in this island over 1,250,000 men. Behind these we have the Local Defence Volunteers numbering 500,000, only a portion of whom, however, are yet armed with rifles or other firearms. We have incorporated into our defence forces every man for whom we have a weapon. We expect a very large addition to our weapons in the near future, and, in preparation for this, we intend to call up, drill, and train further large numbers at once. Those who are not called up or who are employed upon the vast business of munitions production in all its branches serve their country best by re-

maining at their ordinary work until they are required. We also have Dominion armies here. The Canadians had actually landed in France, but have now been safely withdrawn in perfect order with all their artillery and equipment. These very high-class forces from the Dominions will now take part in the defence of the Mother Country.

"Lest the account which I have given of these very large forces should raise the question why they did not take part in the great battle in France, I must make it clear that apart from the divisions training and organising at home only 12 divisions were equipped to fight upon a scale which justified their being sent abroad. This was fully up to the number which the French had been led to expect would be available in France at the ninth month of the war.

"The rest of our forces at home have a fighting value for home defence which will, of course, steadily increase every week that passes. The invasion of Great Britain would at this time require the transportation across the sea of hostile armies upon a very large scale, and after they had been so transported they would have to be continually maintained with all the mass of munitions and supplies which are required for continuous battle, as continuous battle it would be.

"Here we come to the Navy. After all we have a Navy. Some people seem to forget that. We must remind them. For the last 30 years I have been concerned in discussions about the possibilities of oversea invasion, and I took the responsibility on behalf of the Admiralty at the

beginning of the last War of allowing all Regular troops to be sent out of the country, although our territorials had only just been called up and were quite untrained. Therefore, this island was for several months practically denuded of fighting troops. The Admiralty had confidence at that time in their ability to prevent a mass invasion, even though at that time the Germans had a magnificent battle fleet in the proportion of 10 to 16, whereas now they only have a couple of heavy ships worth speaking of.

"We are also told that the Italian Navy is to come to gain sea superiority in these waters. If that is seriously intended I can only say that we shall be delighted to offer Signor Mussolini a free and safeguarded passage through the Straits of Gibraltar in order that he may play the part which he aspires to do. There is general curiosity in the British Fleet to find out whether the Italians are up to the level they were at in the last War, or whether they have fallen off at all. Therefore, it seems to me that so far as seaborne invasion on a great scale is concerned we are far more capable of meeting it to-day than we were at many periods in the last War, and during the early months of this war, before our other troops were trained and while the B. E. F. was already abroad.

"The Navy have never pretended to be able to prevent raids by bodies of 5,000 or 10,000 men, flung suddenly across and thrown ashore at several points on the coast some dark night or foggy morning. The efficacy of sea power, especially under modern conditions, depends upon the in-

vading force being of large size. It has to be of large size, in view of our military strength, to be of any use. If it is of large size then the Navy have something they can find and meet and as it were bite on.

"Now we must remember that even five divisions, however lightly equipped, would require 200 to 250 ships, and with modern air reconnaissance and photography it would not be easy to collect such an armada, marshal it, and conduct it across the sea, without any powerful naval forces to escort it and with the very great possibility that it would be intercepted long before it reached the coast and the men all drowned in the sea, or at the worst blown to pieces with their equipment while trying to land. We also have a great system of minefields, recently strongly reinforced, through which we alone know the channel. If the enemy tries to sweep passages through these minefields it will be the task of the Navy to destroy the minesweepers and any other forces employed to protect them. There should be no difficulty in this owing to our great superiority at sea.

"Those are the regular well-tested, well-proved arguments on which we have relied during many years in peace and war. But the question is whether there are any new methods by which those solid assurances can be circumvented. Odd as it may seem, some attention has been given to this by the Admiralty, whose prime duty and responsibility it is to destroy any large seaborne expedition before it reaches, or at the moment when it reaches, these shores. . . .

"This brings me to the great question of invasion from the air, and of the impending struggle between the British and German air forces. It seems quite clear that no invasion on a scale beyond the capacity of our air forces to crush completely is likely to take place from the air until our Air Force has been definitely overpowered. In the meantime there may be raids by parachute troops and attempted descents of air-borne soldiers. We should be able to give those gentry a warm reception, both in the air and if they reach the ground in any condition to continue the dispute.

"But the great question is, can we break Hitler's air weapon? Now, of course, it is a very great pity that we have not got an air force at least equal to that of the most powerful enemy within striking distance of these shores. But we have a very powerful Air Force, which has proved itself far superior in quality, both in men and in many types of machine, to what we have met so far in the numerous fierce air battles which have been fought. In France, where we were at considerable disadvantage and lost many machines on the ground in the aerodromes, we were accustomed to inflict losses of as much as two to two-and-a-half to one. In the fighting over Dunkirk, which was a sort of no man's land, we undoubtedly beat the German air force, which gave us the mastery locally in the air, and we inflicted losses of three or four to one. Anyone who looks at the photographs which were published a week or so ago of the re-embarkation showing the masses of troops assembled on the

beach and forming an ideal target for hours at a time, must realise that this re-embarkation would not have been possible unless the enemy had resigned all hope of recovering air superiority at that point.

"In the defence of this island the advantages to the defenders will be very great. We hope to improve on the rate of three or four to one which was realised at Dunkirk, and in addition all our injured machines and their crews which get down safely—and there are surprisingly a very great many injured machines and men who get down safely in modern air fighting—all of these fall in an attack upon these islands on friendly soil and live to fight another day, whereas all injured enemy machines and their complements will be total losses as far as the war is concerned. During the great battle in France we gave very powerful and continuous aid to the French Army both by fighters and bombers, but in spite of every kind of pressure we never would allow the entire metropolitan strength of the Air Force in fighters to be consumed. This decision was taken and it was right because the fortunes of the battle in France could not have been decisively affected even if we had thrown in our entire fighter force.

"The battle was lost by the unfortunate strategical opening and by the extraordinary and unforeseen power of the armoured columns and by the great preponderance of the German Army in numbers. Our fighter air force might easily have been exhausted as a mere accident in that great struggle, and we should have found ourselves at the present time in a very serious plight.

"But as it is I am happy to inform the House that our fighter air strength is stronger at the present time, relatively to the Germans, who have suffered terrible losses, than it has ever been, and consequently we believe ourselves to possess the capacity to continue the war in the air under better conditions than we have ever experienced before. I look forward confidently to the exploits of our fighter pilots who will have the glory of saving their native land, their island home, and all they love from the most deadly of all attacks.

"There remains the danger of bombing attacks which will certainly be made very soon upon us by the bomber forces of the enemy. It is true that the German bomber force is superior in numbers to ours, but we have a very large bomber force also which we shall use to strike at military targets in Germany without intermission.

"I do not at all underrate the severity of the ordeal which lies before us, but I believe our countrymen will show themselves capable of standing up to it like the brave men of Barcelona and will be able to stand up to it, and carry on in spite of it, at least as well as any other people in the world. Much will depend upon this, and every man and woman will have the chance to show the finest qualities of their race and render the highest service to their cause. For all of us at this time, whatever our sphere, our station, our occupation, our duty, it will be a help to remember the famous lines:

'He nothing common did or mean,
Upon that memorable scene.'"

Not knowing in what form or where the blow might fall, the people of Britain prepared for the worst, but before I deal with the great air onslaught that finally overtook them, I shall digress for a moment to refer to the vexed question of Eire, which found great prominence at that time.

Addressing a Fianna Fail convention on May 11, Mr. de Valera had referred to the invasion of Belgium and Holland by saying: "To-day these two small nations are fighting for their lives, and it would be unworthy of this small nation if, on an occasion like this, I did not utter our protest against the cruel wrong that has been done them. I am sure that this nation has the necessary courage to face whatever may be coming and to see it through. We have declared our neutrality and proclaimed our desire to save our people from the horrors of war. Small countries like ours had the same desire. Some of these small countries had no greater wish than not to be involved in war. They have been involved against their will, not having done anything to deserve what has happened to them. The fact that we want to keep out of war will not, or may not, be sufficient to save us. The one thing that is going to help to save us, if anything can, is the determination that any invader that comes into this country will be resisted with all our might."

They were prepared to let bygones be bygones so far as Britain was concerned once Ireland had its independence. His one regret was that in a time like the present there was still a cause of

difference between the two countries. He believed that the destiny of the two islands, as it was likely to develop, would be similar in many respects.

On July 5 Mr. de Valera, in a statement, declared:

"In order to prevent misapprehensions which may be created by recent press and wireless statements, I desire to repeat that the Government has no intention of departing from the policy of neutrality adopted last September as representing the unanimous will of the Irish people. The Government is resolved to maintain and defend the country's neutrality in all circumstances."

Two days before the Eireann Government had made an order placing the harbour of Dublin, Dun Laoghaire and Cork under military control. Waterford was added to the list of controlled ports (which also included Bantry Bay and Lough Swilly), on July 10.

A few days later, Mr. de Valera summed up his view of the situation when in an interview he gave to a representative of a New York paper, he declared:

"We are in the unenviable position of being a country which is eyed by two great Powers. We do not wish to become a cockpit in this war. We do not wish to become the base for attack by any Power upon any other Power. We have not the slightest intention of abandoning our neutrality. We intend to resist any attack thereon from any quarter whatever. But if war—which we do not want and for which we are in no way

to blame—comes upon us, we will do our best to defend ourselves. And whoever comes first will be our immediate enemy.

"We have tried to get a united Ireland", he continued. "The present situation wherein six counties in the North inhabited by the same race as ourselves, hundreds of thousands of whom would wish to be united with our twenty-six counties in one State, is anomalous and dangerous. Only in the union of all Ireland will the aspirations of the people be satisfied. As it is now, one part of Ireland is neutral and the other belligerent. That is abnormal from the point of view of defence, as many of us foresaw. To face this emergency Ireland should be whole and undivided. The determination of policy and defence measures are possible only on such a basis. And such measures must be founded on neutrality.

"We are not prepared to join in any such proposal as a defence committee while Ireland is divided. What we do propose is union of Northern Ireland with Eire.

"This could be accomplished in a day. We are perfectly agreeable to Northern Ireland retaining its parliament and its local governing machinery to deal with local problems just as they do to-day. The only change we contemplate is that the Northern Irish Parliament should be subject to the Parliament of all Ireland, instead of to the British Parliament. Then defence measures can be worked out effectively.

"Such defence measures must be worked out on the basis of neutrality. Strict neutrality is

our best safeguard. If we let one country in, that inevitably would provoke the other to attack. Our only hope is to let none in."

Since then the people of Eire have been able to remain united over their attitude towards the war (though thousands of their young men joined the British Army, Navy and Air Force), but that attitude has cost the Allies dear in that they sadly lacked bases along the coasts of Southern Ireland; German diplomatic representatives were able to work freely in Dublin and at the time when Britain was in acute danger of invasion, the possibility of Eire being used as a stepping stone (unwillingly beyond doubt) was always there.

And now before we consider the great air battles over Britain, there was one outstanding event—on July 19—worth recording—Hitler's speech to the Reichstag in which (as after the fall of Poland) he made a peace move. This, as on the other occasion, fell on deaf ears.

He appealed thus: "Mr. Churchill ought for once to believe me when I say that a great empire will be destroyed—an empire which it was never my intention to destroy or harm. If this struggle continues it can only end in the annihilation of one of us. Mr. Churchill thinks it will be Germany. I know it will be Britain. I am not the vanquished begging for mercy. I speak as a victor. I can see no reason why the war must go on. We should like to avert the sacrifices which must claim millions. It is possible that once again Mr. Churchill will brush aside this statement of mine by saying that it is merely

born of fear and doubt of victory. In that case I shall have relieved my conscience of the things to come."

Three days later Lord Halifax replied to Hitler's speech reiterating Britain's determination to fight on.

Although attempts have been made to describe Germany's apparent intentions on Britain during the fateful months of August, September and October, 1940, as an "invasion scare", it has now been proved that nothing could be further from the truth. The fierce aerial onslaughts on London and Southern England during that period were part of a definite plan to invade the country. The main objects of the air attacks were (*a*) to destroy the R. A. F. Fighter Command and (*b*) to so lower public morale that invasion would be all the easier. And the frightful attacks on London had a very definite bearing on the second point. It was hoped through these raids that life in the capital would be completely disorganized and that, as a result, proper resistance throughout the South of England, particularly the south-east, would be very seriously affected. But Goering failed in two vital points. The first was that his much-vaunted Luftwaffe never gained supremacy and, secondly, the people of Britain, and particularly of London, stood up to the raiding in the most amazingly courageous fashion, in a way undreamt of by the Nazi leaders.

There were three distinct periods in the Battle—1. The heavy aerial fighting between July 10 and August 18 over the Channel and the

South Coast; 2. between August 28 and September 27 when the battle raged over London; and 3. the battle of attrition between September 28 and October 31. The German Air Force started off by attempting to wear down the British air defences, then by superior numbers to overwhelm Fighter Command. And before the battle of London started attacks were made on airfields guarding the approaches to the city and also attempts were made to gain supremacy over the Thames Estuary.

So while the Battle of Britain raged the Germans were making great preparations to invade the island. They gathered together vast concentrations of barges for the purpose but here again they had to contend with an unexpected factor—the magnificent work done by R. A. F. bombers. Right from the day the B. E. F. evacuated France, the bombers were out in whatever strength they could muster, at first attacking airfields newly acquired by the Germans; for instance, on the day that the British bomber squadrons were evacuated from France, the R. A. F. attacked the airfields at Rouen and Amiens where, it was believed, German aircraft were gathering for night raids over England. From then onwards non-stop attacks were kept up on airfields in Northern France and the Low Countries till eventually, along with such operations, repeated attacks were made on barge concentrations, which were there to attempt an invasion of England.

Paradoxical though it may seem, the unexpectedly early collapse of France was to the

favour of Britain in this way. Although the Germans reached Paris some little time before they expected to do so, the fact that about three days later the French were prepared to negotiate an armstice took the invaders by surprise. Therefore the final scheme for the invasion of Britain had to be put in hand immediately but valuable weeks (from the British point of view) were to elapse before anythng could be put into operation—and in that period, the British were completing their plans to stem any invasion attempt and in fact, as I have shown above, were able to concentrate their small but highly trained bomber force to strike out at selected targets and deliver vital blows at the Luftwaffe. In addition to that, the airfields in Northern France had been left in a far from satisfactory state—from the German point of view—and ground crews had to be brought up along with supplies and a vast new organisation set in motion. The Luftwaffe, which despite Germany's overwhelming victory had received heavy punishment, had to be reorganized and rested and even the long-range bomber units which had not been so fiercely engaged were not in a position to operate effectively by night against Great Britain from bases in Holland and Belgium because of lack of experience in night flying. Furthermore, for an actual invasion attempt, the collection of barges was not an easy task and it was not until July 12 that R. A. F. reconnaissance established the presence of large concentrations in the Belgian canals, and their presence in the Channel ports in large numbers was not reported till the begin-

ning of September.

Britain was therefore given valuable time in which to see to her defences and also strike back and when the Germans did make their maximum effort, they discovered that for the first time they were up against very effectively organized fighter defences that could not be disturbed by land forces. Despite Britain's sad lack of preparedness in many other directions, the Fighter Command, thanks to the untiring efforts of Sir Hugh Dowding, its A.O.C.-in-C., had been carefully prepared during the three years before the outbreak of war. Co-ordination between detection and defence, methods of operational control through fighter groups and sectors, a reliable system of communications, highly organized operation rooms—all these had been perfected by the time the Battle of Britain started and above all, through the stress of the Battle, they kept working so that it was also possible during that period to watch every new move by the enemy and devise a counter-move to meet it.

Another big factor that must be taken into account was the great loss in aircraft suffered by the Luftwaffe during August and September. Goering thought he would win through by great numerical superiority but what he did not count on was the fact that his bombers were highly vulnerable. They were slow, poorly armed and no match for the Hurricanes and Spitfires.

But above these factors was the fierce determination of the gallant R. A. F. pilots to keep back the invader and the ground crews and all those on whom the vast organization of aerial

defence rested to see that, despite grave shortage of numbers, as many planes as possible would be kept aloft. In addition, there were the civil defence organizations that fought the flames day and night in the towns and cities with such grim determination.

Here are extracts from an official account of the Battle of Britain in its three stages :

In the first stage the enemy sent over massed formations of bombers (mostly Ju. 87 and 88's, He. 111's, and Do. 17's) escorted by single and twin-engined fighters flying in large unwieldy formations 5,000-10,000 ft. above; 26 attacks were made in the first stage, commencing with shipping. On August 8, 60 enemy planes in the morning and over 100 after midday, deployed on a 20-mile front, fiercely attempted to destroy or disperse a convoy off the Isle of Wight and succeeded in sinking two ships. At 4-15 p.m. over 130 planes attacked and dispersed another convoy off Bournemouth, losing fairly heavily in the process. Three days later the assault was renewed with dive-bombing attacks on Portland and Weymouth, as well as on convoys in the Thames Estuary and off Harwich, some damage being done both in Portland and Weymouth. In the early morning of Aug. 12 some 200 planes were launched in 11 waves against Dover and shortly before noon 150 more attacked Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. By this time the Germans had already lost 182 aircraft. On Aug. 13 and 15 renewed attacks were made on Portsmouth, some with 300-400 planes. The rising toll of losses from Spitfires and Hurricanes,

however, made the enemy realise that the Fighter Command was considerably stronger than he imagined and, with the aim of putting it out of action, he sent large forces to attack fighter aerodromes in South and S.-E. England : Dover, Deal, Hawkinge, Martlesham, Lympne, Middle Wallop, Kenley and Biggin Hill, a number of planes penetrating as far as Croydon. Some damage was done, but the Luftwaffe lost 180 machines. On Aug. 16 and 18 Rochester, Kenley, Croydon, Biggin Hill, Manston, West Malling, Gosport, Northold and Tangmere were attacked by 500-600 planes, 245 being shot down on these dates. Brilliant victories were registered by the Fighter-Command, as when a squadron of 13 Hurricanes shot down without loss an equal number of the enemy in 10 minutes in the Thames Estuary on Aug. 18. In the 10 days since Aug. 8 the Luftwaffe had lost 697 aircraft and their crews, and the R. A. F. 153 planes (60 pilots saved).

The usual tactics were to attack objectives on or near the coast in order to draw off R. A. F. fighters, these feint attacks being followed 30—40 minutes later by the real attacks against ports and aerodromes between Brighton and Portland. Generally the attacks were countered by using about half the available squadrons to deal with enemy fighters and the rest to attack the bombers, which normally flew at 11,000-15,000 ft. frequently descending to 7,000-8,000 ft. Attacks from the stern on Me. 109's and 110's were particularly effective.

These heavy losses caused the enemy to discontinue large-scale operations for five days

during which he confined himself to reconnaissance activity by single aircraft, with spasmodic bombing of aerodromes which cost 39 aircraft against 10 R. A. F. losses (six pilots saved). In the next stage diversionary attacks against different parts of the country were less frequent, and the main attack was delivered on a wider front. The enemy changed his tactics by increasing the size of fighter escorts and reducing that of bomber formations, the latter being protected by a "box" of fighters weaving in and out of the bombers and by a covering escort flying at a great height. With these formations, which on several occasions succeeded by sheer weight in breaking through the forward screen of British fighters and attaining their objective, some 35 major attacks were delivered against inland fighter aerodromes and aircraft factories between Aug. 24-Sept. 5, purely residential districts in Kent, Essex and the Thames Estuary being also bombed.

From Aug. 24-29 the enemy continued to attack Portland, Dover and Maidstone heavily; several areas in Essex were bombed; and there was fierce fighting over Gravesend, Deal and the North Foreland. In the evening of Aug. 24, 110 enemy planes were intercepted near Maidstone and fled without offering battle. On the following day Portsmouth and Southampton were attacked ineffectively, a large number of bombs falling in the sea. Heavy assaults were also made in the Dover-Folkestone area over the Thames Estuary and in Kent, continuing until Aug. 30, when the attack was switched against

inland aerodromes. On Aug. 30 and 31, 800 planes attempted to put out of action the Kenley, North Weald, Hornchurch, Debden, Lympne, Detling, Duxford, Northholt and Biggin Hill aerodromes. The attacks (one of which got to within 10 miles of London) continued until Sept. 5 and cost the enemy 562 planes and the R. A. F. 219 (132 pilots saved). The heavy task of the defence was shown by the fact that in the first two stages of the Battle of Britain (Aug. 8—Sept. 5, inclusive), 4,523 fighter patrols were flown in daylight, averaging 156 daily.

The results of the first two phases were, from the enemy's point of view, disappointing. Though damage had been done to aerodromes, they had failed entirely to put them out of action and no interruption occurred to R. A. F. operations, thanks to the untiring work of the ground staffs. On Sept. 7 the attack was switched against London.

On the latter date (Sept. 7) 350 enemy planes attacked in two waves east of Croydon up to the Thames Estuary and attempted to destroy the Docks; they were met over Kent and East Surrey but a number broke through and were engaged over the capital. On this day, "for the first time since September, 1666. . . . Londoners saw flames leaping up from various points in the crowded and densely populated districts of Dockland and Woolwich, while from every German radio station announcers broadcast a running commentary on the action in which imagination and wishful thinking were nicely blended." Damage was inflicted on dock buildings, several factories, rail-

way communications, and gas and electricity plants, 103 enemy aircraft being destroyed. Renewed attacks were pressed home on Sept. 9 and 11 (when 30 planes reached Central London), 12 (when a single plane using cloud cover bombed Buckingham Palace), 13 and 15—"the greatest day."

On this date (a Sunday) the enemy made his greatest single effort (up to then) against London. At 11-30 a.m. over 100 planes, closely followed by another 150, comprising Do. bombers escorted by Me. fighters, crossed the coast at three points—near Ramsgate, between Dover and Folkestone, and north of Dungeness—flying at 15,000-26,000 ft. Battle was quickly joined and raged for 45 minutes over East Kent and London; some 100 German bombers burst through the defences, a number being intercepted above the centre of the city at noon. The battle was carried out at speeds of 300-400 m.p.h., which rendered place names meaningless, e.g., the enemy might have been intercepted over Maidstone but not destroyed until when near Calais. Intelligence patrol reports illustrated the size of the area over which the battle was fought by such phrases as "plane attack delivered—Hammersmith to Dungeness," or "Bow to the French Coast"; in fact, the battle was fought in a cube about 80 miles long, 38 broad, and 5-6 high, in which 150-200 individual combats took place. Sixteen squadrons of No. 11 Group, followed by five from Nos. 10 and 12, were sent up to engage the enemy. Five Spitfire squadrons met the advance guard of the Luftwaffe in the area Maidstone-Canterbury-Dover-Dunge-

ness, with Hurricane squadrons intercepting farther back between Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells and South London. When battle was joined regular formations were lost and each pilot chose an individual foe, a general engagement developing from London to the coast and beyond. Crippled and disorganised by the violence of the British attacks, the German pilots proved themselves no match for the R. A. F. and a number of striking individual victories were won by British, Polish and Czech pilots against greatly superior enemy forces. Among the many incidents of that eventful morning was the shooting down of a Dornier which fell outside Victoria Station, its crew making a parachute descent on Kennington Oval, while the Hurricane responsible itself got into an uncontrollable spin, its pilot landing safely in Chelsea. In another case a single Hurricane attacked 12 Me.'s, who all fled after one of their number had been shot down. By 12-30 the fight was over, but after a lull of 1½ hours fresh enemy formations, of a strength equal to that of the morning, came in by the same route. Twenty-one fighter squadrons engaged, this time on fairly equal terms; the superiority of the R.A.F. was immediately established and the enemy formations were "ripped through like a knife going through calico" and instantly broken up. Again a number of "dog-fights" took place from London to the coast and the enemy eventually retreated in headlong rout, after losing 185 planes during the day as against 25 R.A.F. losses (13 pilots saved).

Between Sept. 11-Oct. 5 the enemy delivered

32 major day attacks, 15 against Greater London, 10 against Kent and the Thames Estuary, six on Southampton and one on Reading. The German pilots, however, showed a progressive deterioration of morale, which in the beginning had been high, and made many of their attacks from high level, using greatly increased fighter escorts. By the first week of October R.A.F. aerodromes had completely recovered from the earlier attacks and increasingly heavy toll was taken of the enemy, whose casualties showed a steady increase against an equally steady R.A.F. decrease. How hard the fighting was is shown from the fact that from Sept. 8—Oct. 5, 3,291 day patrols were flown and from Oct. 6—31, 2,786—a total of 6,077. The brunt of the fighting fell on No. 11 Group, assisted by Nos. 10 and 12; on Sept. 27 this Group destroyed 99 enemy planes for a loss of 15 pilots.

On Oct. 6 the enemy completely changed his tactics, withdrawing nearly all his long-range bombers for fighters and fighter-bombers. His depleted bombing force was henceforth rarely seen in the day and used nearly always at night, having been driven out of the British sky by daylight. London still remained the main target but the attacks were usually carried out from very great heights by machines which jettisoned their bombs without pretence of seeking military objectives and precipitately made off. R.A.F. tactics were similarly altered with success, No. 11 Group accounting for 167 enemy machines in 3½ weeks at a cost of 45 pilots. During October the Battle of Britain gradually died away as the enemy,

taught by bitter experience, made fewer and fewer daylight appearances and came more and more at night, and by the end of the month the British victory was final and complete.

An analysis of the results obtained by the enemy in August, September and October showed how completely he had failed in his objective, which was declared by Goebbels at the outset of the attack as "the final conquest of the last enemy, England." In attacks on shipping they sank five ships and damaged five more in coastal convoys; they did intermittent and sometimes severe damage to aerodromes; scored hits on a number of factories which slowed up production for a time; did considerable damage in London to the Docks and various famous buildings, including Buckingham Palace; destroyed or damaged some thousands of houses; killed during the day 1,700 persons and wounded 3,360 and at night killed 12,581 and wounded 16,965. The Luftwaffe for its part lost between Aug. 8—Oct. 31 2,375 machines definitely destroyed, apart from a large number so severely crippled that they almost certainly failed to return to their bases. The R.A.F. lost during the same period 375 pilots killed and 358 wounded; to the airmen who saved Britain in the autumn of 1940 Mr. Churchill paid his memorable tribute, "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

When the Battle of Britain was over the Luftwaffe concentrated its efforts during the winter of 1940-41 on the great night offensive against industrial centres. Then it was that

another word crept into the English language, which will ever be remembered as pointing to one of the blackest stains on Nazi Germany—with the use of an average of 200 aircraft per night, the Germans adopted the technique of "Coventrating" Britain's major industrial cities. This meant the concentration of the whole of the bombing effort by night on a single target, with the hope that the ground defences would be overwhelmed and centres of war production would be obliterated one by one. They did not succeed in their objective, but they did succeed in wiping out large residential areas. The first of the series was the night attack on Coventry of November 14—15, followed by other big attacks on Birmingham (November 19—20), Bristol (November 24—25), Sheffield (December 12—13) and Manchester (December 22—23). With the failure of these tactics, the Nazis tried others, one being the Battle of the Atlantic, in an attempt to starve out the country.

And so the results of the Battle of Britain were many, not the least being the destruction of the legend that Germany was invincible and that she could "blitzkrieg" her way through anything.

CHAPTER III

THE AFRICAN CAMPAIGNS

ITALY'S declaration of war on Britain and France on June 11th, 1940, seriously compromised the Allies' positions all along the Mediterranean and for Britain the position was to appear almost overwhelming when France decided to sue for peace. It was a critical hour but with the scanty resources at their disposal the British military leaders by a series of brilliant actions in the Mediterranean zone were able to stave off the more serious Italian threats and despite Mussolini's bombast, that he would soon overrun Egypt and the Middle East, his generals showed amazing timidity despite their great superiority in men and materials, so that, missing early opportunities, they were slowly pushed back and had to call in German assistance in Libya while Eritrea and Abyssinia were eventually lost to them after a number of hard-fought battles in which Indian troops showed great courage and endurance.

Before dealing with the various campaigns in Africa let us recall Mussolini's fateful action on June 11th. At 4-30 p.m. the previous day the Italian Foreign Minister, Ciano, handed the British and French Ambassadors the following statement: "H. M. the King-Emperor declares

that from to-morrow, June 11th, Italy considers herself at war with France and Britain", and on the same evening from the balcony of the Palazzo Venezia, in Rome, Mussolini thundered to a wildly cheering mob :

"The declaration of war has been handed to the Ambassadors of Britain and France. We are going to war against the plutocratic and reactionary democracies of the West, who have hindered the advance and often threatened the existence of the Italian people. The events of recent history can be summarised in these words : half-promises, threats, blackmail, and, finally, the League siege of the 52 States. Our conscience is absolutely tranquil.

"Italy has done what was humanly possible to avoid the hurricane which is overwhelming Europe, but all was in vain. It would have been enough to revise the treaties, to adapt them to the vital demands of the life of nations, not to have persisted in the policy of guarantees, not to have rejected the proposal which the Fuehrer made last October. But all that belongs to the past. We are to-day decided to face all the risks and sacrifices of war. We are taking up arms after having solved the problem of our land frontiers, to settle that of our sea frontiers. We want to break the territorial and military chains which are strangling us in our sea.

"This gigantic struggle is the struggle of peoples poor but rich in workers against the exploiters. It is the struggle of the fruitful and young peoples against the sterile peoples on the threshold of their decline.

"I solemnly declare that Italy does not intend to drag other peoples who are her neighbours into the conflict. Let Switzerland, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Egypt, and Greece take note of these words, for it will depend entirely upon them if they are fully confirmed or not. . . .

"Proletarian and Fascist Italy is on her feet. We have only one watchword. This word is already in the air and is burning in Italian hearts from the Alps to the Indian Ocean—to conquer."

In London, the Minister of Information, Mr. Duff Cooper, had a few things to say about the Italians' treachery, when he declared :

"Mussolini has declared war upon the Allies, with whom Italy fought in the last war and who then by their efforts saved Italy from destruction. He has timed the blow with characteristic cowardice and treachery. He has waited until France was fighting desperately against great odds, but at last the opportunity to stab an old friend in the back, in the hour of that friend's greatest peril, has proved too strong a temptation for Mussolini to resist. It will be remembered for generations as one of the vilest acts of history.

"The foolish crowd of young Fascists who were cheering this afternoon in Rome little knew the fearful fate that awaits them. Whatever temporary successes they may achieve in the early days of warfare, they will certainly be defeated in the end. Italy has never won a war without assistance, except against the unfortunate Abyssinians, who were armed with spears against tanks, and with bows and arrows against poison gas. In her struggle for independence in the last

century, she was assisted at every turn, both by Britain and France. It was French soldiers, not Italians, who drove the Austrians out of Italy. Garibaldi, the heroic Italian, registered the debt that his country owed to Britain when he called down a curse upon any Italian Government who, in the future, should fight against the country that had saved her.

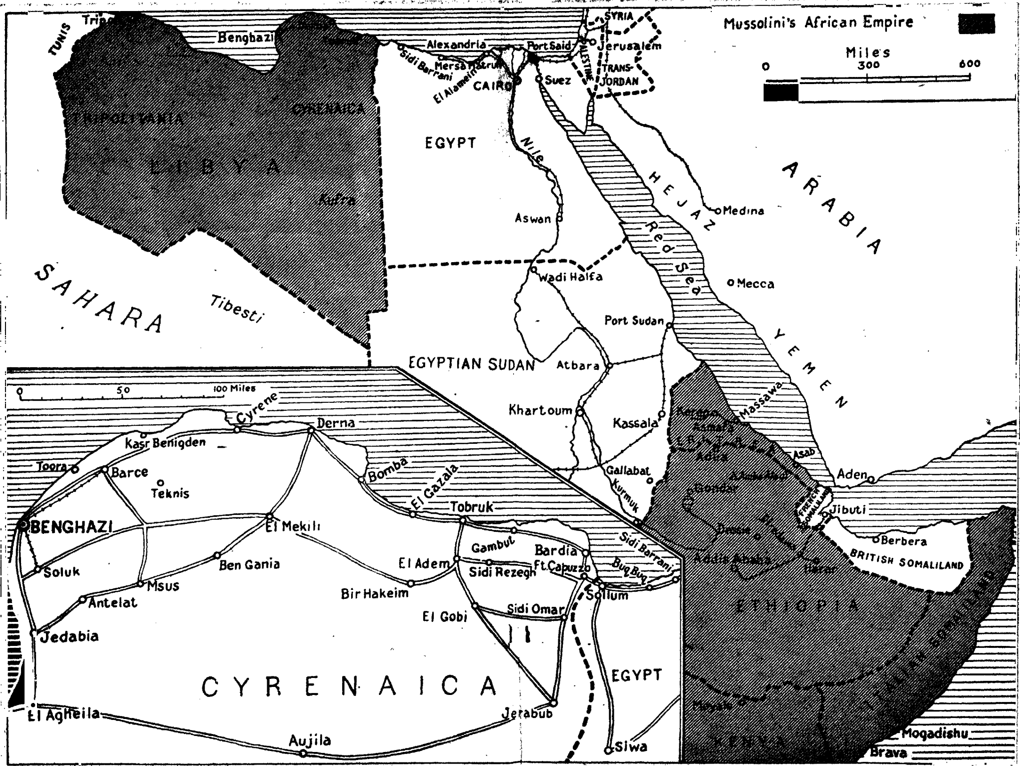
"Supposing the impossible were to happen, and Germany were to be victorious, the fate of Italy would be even worse, for, while according to our principles we should allow defeated Italy to retain her independence, victorious Germany would certainly reduce her to the position of a vassal state. Italy, the heir of Rome, has allied herself with those very barbarians who destroyed the Roman Empire, and is assisting them in this, their second attempt, to wipe out civilisation. But we need have no fear of such an eventuality. Germany is no more likely to win the war with the assistance of Italy than she was without her. On the country, it is more than likely that Italy will prove a liability rather than an asset, as she proved to her allies in the last war, when, after the disgraceful flight of the Italian Army at Caporetto, the British and the French had to dispatch troops in order to restore the position in Italy and put back some courage in the hearts of the Italians. From one point of view the entry of Italy will prove of immediate assistance. The Italian Peninsula has formed the great gap in our blockade of Germany. Through that tunnel supplies of all kinds have been reaching the enemy. From tonight that tunnel is closed,

and the effectiveness of the blockade will be increased enormously.

"No war has ever been declared with so little provocation as this. Italy had no quarrel with Britain or France, and had made no claim which had been refused. There was no subject which our two Governments were not ready to discuss, no problem that they were not anxious to solve. In what Mussolini said this afternoon I cannot find that he himself mentioned any cause for his action save that Britain and France were richer nations than Italy. It is the excuse of the man who breaks into another's house and cuts his throat in order to steal his money.

"This is the criminal act of a common murderer—the act of a man who, although he rules over a Christian people, not only loathes and despises Christianity, but makes no pretence to be bound by the ordinary laws which civilised human beings respect. Murderers often succeed in the first instance, for the simple reason that civilised life is carried on upon the assumption that murder will not be committed, but the end of murderers is always shameful, as the end of Mussolini will be. He will bring misery and starvation upon the people; he will leave nothing behind him but the curses of those whom he has betrayed; he will increase the number of ruins for which Italy has long been famous.

"I believe that the news that Italy has joined in the war is well timed to strengthen the endurance and encourage the hearts of the French and the British people, because we know



Mussolini's African Empire
Miles
0
300
600
TUNIS
Benghazi
TRIPOLITANIA
CYRENAICA
LIBYA
Kufra
SAHARA
Tibesti
Alexandria
Sidi Barrani
Mersa Matruh
El Alamein
Port Said
CAIRO
Suez
SYRIA
Jerusalem
PALESTINE
TRANS-JORDAN
EGYPT
Nile
Aswan
Wadi Halfa
Port Sudan
EGYPTIAN SUDAN
Atbara
Khartoum
Kassala
Gallabat
Kurmuk
HEJAZ
Red Sea
ARABIA
Medina
Mecca
YEMEN
Massawa
Asab
Aden
Jibuti
FRENCH SOMALILAND
Berbera
BRITISH SOMALILAND
Gondar
Dessie
Addis Ababa
Harar
ETHIOPIA
ITALIAN SOMALILAND
Mogadishu
Brava
KENYA
Moyale
0
50
100 Miles
Cyrene
Derna
Kasr Benigden
Toora
Barce
Teknis
BENGHAZI
El Mekili
Bomba
El Gazala
Tobruk
Gambut
Bardia
El Adem
Sidi Rezegh
Ft. Capuzzo
Sidi Barrani
Buq Buq
Sollum
Soluk
Msus
Ben Gania
Antelat
Bir Hakeim
El Gobi
Sidi Omar
Jedabia
CYRENAICA
EGYPT
El Agheila
Aujila
Jerabub
Siwa

the Italians of old, and we know that, whatever other qualities they may possess, we can never fail to beat them on the field of battle."

The French Premier, M. Paul Reynaud, made the following declaration from Paris:

"We are in the sixth day of the greatest battle in history. The conflagration began on the Somme, and has extended to the east as far as the Meuse. For six days and five nights our soldiers, our airmen, and the R. A. F. have been facing an enemy superior in numbers and armaments.

"In this war, which is no longer a war of continuous fronts, but a war of strong points grouped in depth, our armies have been manoeuvring in retreat. They did not abandon any strong point until they had inflicted cruel losses on the enemy. The kilometres gained by the enemy are scarred by destroyed tanks and by aeroplanes brought down.

"In spite of the enemy's gain in prestige it remains to be seen what will be the effect of these losses on the issue of the war. In any case nothing can weaken our will to fight for our land and liberty. We are ready for the trial which we have to face. Our heads will not be bowed.

"This very moment, when France, wounded but valiant and undaunted, is fighting against the hegemony of Germany, when she is fighting for the independence of all other peoples as well as her own, has been chosen by Mussolini to declare war on us. How shall we judge this act? France has nothing to say. The world which is looking on will pass judgment. You know what

the attitude of the Italian Government was towards our attempts at *rapprochement* and to our long patience. You know that repeatedly I have publicly followed the lead of my predecessors, and said that between us and Italy there are no problems which could not be solved by friendly negotiations. The highest moral authorities in the world, the Pope and President Roosevelt, have repeatedly tried, but in vain, to prevent this war, which is opposed to the Christian idea and to human solidarity.

"Mussolini decided that blood must flow. What was the pretext for this declaration of war? When our Ambassador, M. Francois Poncet, asked this question of Ciano, the latter replied that Mussolini was only carrying out the engagements undertaken by him with Hitler. The same declaration of war was addressed to Britain.

"Hostilities will begin to-night at midnight. Force will now speak. In the Mediterranean even more than anywhere else the Allies are strong. France enters this war with a clear conscience. For her this is not a mere word. In the course of her long and glorious history France has passed through more severe trials and always astonished the world. France cannot die."

In Germany, Ribbentrop declared that "German and Italian soldiers will march shoulder to shoulder and continue the fight until Britain and France are ready to respect the vital rights of young nations to the full. Only after the victory of National-Socialist Germany and Fascist Italy will it be possible to assure a

happier future for our two peoples." In a telegram sent by Hitler to Mussolini, the former said that he was "deeply moved by the world-historic decision" taken by Italy and assured the Italian dictator of "our indivisible community in the struggle." A telegram in similar terms was also sent by Hitler to King Victor Emmanuel.

The Italian Army had little fighting to do against the practically beaten French, but at sea Mussolini's fleet was not doing at all well; the Italian Navy cut a sorry figure during the whole period of Italy's part in the war. Early in Rome's belligerency—on July 9th—there was a naval action which the British Commander-in-Chief (Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham) described as "disappointing", when a British naval force contacted two Italian battleships and a number of cruisers and destroyers east of Malta. The Italian force immediately retired behind a smoke-screen without attempting to give battle, was pursued but gained safety behind the shelter of their shore defences. It was officially stated a few days later that "the Italian fleet, which included two fast battleships and was superior in both cruisers and destroyers to our own force, was located by the British Fleet when in mid-Mediterranean. They retired towards their own coast, where, when under the protecting cover of their own metropolitan air force, they stood for one brief moment to engage the British Fleet at extreme range. Within a few moments the accuracy of the British fire forced them to retire at full speed under the

cover of their coast defences, and the British Fleet was left master of the battlefield."

On July 19th however a British naval force had better luck when H.M.A.S. "Sydney" accompanied by a small destroyer force engaged the Italian cruiser "Bartolomeo Colleoni", one of the fastest cruisers in the world—said to have had a speed of 40 knots while on trial—and another cruiser of the same class north-west of Crete. They tried to escape but accurate fire from the "Sydney" reduced the Italian cruiser's speed and destroyers finished her off. The second cruiser, though hit, managed to escape.

Let us now turn for a moment to the position on the Libyan-Egyptian frontier. The first official account regarding the situation there was reported by the British G.H.Q. in Africa in a statement issued on August 6th, which said that the first phase of the operations in the Western Desert had come to an end; during that period a small British mobile force consisting of a few guns and a few companies of infantry had completely dominated the eastern frontier area of Libya against greatly superior numerical Italian forces. It was known that the enemy had a large force in readiness and an attack could be expected. The frontier, however, remained quiet and on August 17th it was reported that British warships had shelled Fort Capuzzo, Bardia and other objectives in the vicinity. Great damage was caused and it was afterwards discovered that the Italians had evacuated Fort Capuzzo.

At the beginning of September it was reported that notwithstanding heavy commitments else-

where, it had been found possible to send naval reinforcements to the Mediterranean and this movement, while plainly visible to the Italians, had not been molested. Then came the news that Italian troops from Libya had crossed the Egyptian frontier on September 13th, occupied the village of Sollum and penetrated a few miles into Egyptian territory. But the enemy was continuously harassed and only found himself in a waterless desert surrounded by sand-dunes, devoid of water supplies and no metalled roads. But the Italians continued their advance and on September 16th it was reported they had occupied Sidi-Barrani—75 miles inside Egypt. There they set about consolidating their positions.

Late in October attention was suddenly diverted from the Western Desert to the other side of the Mediterranean. Italy decided to make war on Greece (which is dealt with in Chapter IV).

Early in November in the course of a review of the war situation in the House of Commons Mr. Churchill referred to the situation in the Mediterranean and Egypt when he said: "During all these months of invasion, so near and so deadly, we have never failed to reinforce our armies in Egypt, almost to the limits of our shipping capacity, not only with men but with precious weapons which it was a wrench to take from our forces here. Scores of thousands of troops have left this island month after month, or have been drawn from other parts of the Empire, for the Middle East. These troops have been streaming away from this island during the months when some

of those who now talk so gaily about the 'inavsion scare' were scared stiff themselves.

"Several times I have told the House that I could not guarantee a favourable result in the Middle East. After all, our position there was calculated on the basis that France was our ally, and that the powerful French armies that General Weygand had organised would stand side by side with us in the discharge of our joint obligations. The submission of the French Government to the German conquest and to the Italian exploitation not only deprives us of those armies in Syria, Tunis, Algeria, and Morocco, but has denied us the assistance of the fine French Navy and the use of the French naval and air bases in the Mediterranean.

"Such a frightful desertion and loss might well have confronted us with an insoluble problem. The Italian Army in Libya, which some months ago far outnumbered the British and Imperial Forces in and around Egypt, seemed likely to roll forward irresistibly upon the Nile Valley and the Suez Canal. I am thankful to be able to assure the House that the balance of forces on the frontiers of Egypt and in the Sudan is far less unfavourable than it was at the time of the French collapse. I can certainly not prophesy to the House about battles which have yet to be fought, but I think that at the beginning of July, if we cast our minds back, the House would have been very glad to be assured that on November 5 we should still be holding in largely increased force every position of any importance.

"We have not had any serious collisions with the Italian forces, but we have every reason to be content with the results of the skirmishes and forays which have taken place on the ground and in the air. Up to the end of September the Italians' officially published casualties for the fighting in Libya amounted to 800 killed, 1,700 wounded, and 860 missing. Our own casualties for the same period and in the same theatre were 66 killed, 68 wounded, and 36 missing—a scale of something like 20 to one. These facts speak for themselves, and should be a good augury for the greater battles and engagements which will develop perhaps in the winter, certainly in the spring.

"At the same time that the Navy is keeping open the sea routes under the very dangerous U-boat attack, and endeavouring to hunt down merchant raiders in the outer seas and maintain a strict blockade, we have ceaselessly strengthened the Fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean, and are ready at any time to engage the Italian Navy in a general action. Time after time our Fleet has moved into close proximity to the main concentrations of the Italian Fleet, and we know that its presence has been detected from the air, but so far these cruises have not resulted in any decisive encounter.

"Still, the power of the British Fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean goes a long way to restore the situation created by the collapse of France, and is a great guarantee to our friend and

ally, Turkey, of the unweakening power of Great Britain on the sea. Therefore, whether you look at the Home Front or at the Mediterranean theatre, I do not think it can be denied that we are far better off than anyone would have ventured to predict four or five months ago."

Referring to Greece that had just been attacked he said : "But now a new call has suddenly been made upon us. The Italian Dictator, perhaps embarrassed by the somewhat florid flirtations of M. Laval with the German conqueror, or perhaps playing his part in some new predatory design has, in his customary cold-blooded way, fallen upon the small but famous and immortal Greek nation. Without the slightest provocation, Signor Mussolini has invaded Greece—or tried to do so—and his aircraft have murdered an increasing number of Greek civilians, women and children, in Salonika and many other open Greek towns. The Greek King, his Government, and the Greek people have resolved to fight for life and honour.

"France and Great Britain guaranteed to come to the aid of Greece if she were the victim of unprovoked aggression. It was a joint guarantee, and unhappily the Vichy Government is at this moment engaged in sincere and loyal collaboration with Herr Hitler in his schemes for establishing a so-called new order in Europe. At any rate, the Vichy Government is no longer in a position to play any effective part in the task they have accepted. We are therefore left alone. We have carefully abstained from any action likely to draw upon the Greeks the enmity of the crimi-

nal dictators. For their part, the Greeks have maintained so strict a neutrality that we were unacquainted with their dispositions or intentions.

"I have been at some pains to set forth to the House the very serious preoccupations which dominate us both at home and in the Middle East. We face one gigantic army across the Channel; we face another very powerful army, much more numerous, on the frontier of the Libyan desert; and I must, as I say, approach the new task with a strong sense of the immense responsibilities which rest upon us both at home and in Egypt, and of the very great and continual dangers by which we are confronted. In the circumstances there is only one thing we can do. We shall do our best.

"We have already established a naval and air base in Crete, which will enable us to extend the activities and radius of the Navy and the Air Force. We have begun the bombing attack upon military objectives in the Italian cities and bases in the south of Italy. That will continue on an ever-growing scale. . . ."

Following the arrival of fresh British naval forces in the Mediterranean continuous attacks were carried on against Italian bases at widely separated points and also minor victories were gained over the Italian Fleet, but the big news came on November 11th when it was reported that the Fleet Air Arm had scored a brilliant success against Italian capital ships in a night attack on Taranto. A battleship of the recently-completed "Littorio" class, the heaviest of the Italian naval units (35,000 tons), was left badly down by

the bows, with her forecastle under water and a heavy list to starboard; a battleship of the "Cavour" class (23,000 tons) was beached, with her stern up to and including the after-turret under water; a second battleship of this class was also severely damaged and probably beached; two cruisers were left listing to starboard surrounded by oil fuel; and two fleet auxiliaries were seen with their sterns under water. Their attacks were pressed home with aerial torpedoes, by planes operating from the aircraft-carriers "Illustrious" and "Eagle," and only two of the machines engaged were lost. Describing this action in the House of Commons and congratulating Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham, Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, Mr. Churchill pointed out that of the six Italian battleships in commission at the outbreak of war only three remained, a result which decisively altered the balance of naval power in the Mediterranean and would have repercussions throughout the world.

The next big naval victory in the Mediterranean was on March 28th, 1941, when the Royal Navy inflicted a crushing defeat on the Italians off Cape Matapan (the southernmost point of Greece).

About midday on March 27th air reconnaissance reported enemy cruisers at sea S.E. of Sicily. Sir Andrew Cunningham, at Alexandria with the main body of the Fleet, acting on the supposition that the probable intention of the enemy cruisers was to attack convoys between Egypt and Greece, made the following disposi-

tion of his forces; Vice-Admiral H. D. Pridham-Whippell, flying his flag in H. M. cruiser "Orion" (Flag Capt. G. R. B. Back) 7,215 tons, accompanied by the cruisers H. M. S. "Ajax" (Capt. E. D. B. McCarthy) 6,985 tons, H. M. S. "Gloucester" (Flag Capt. H. A. Rowley) 9,400 tons, and H.M.A.S. "Perth" (Capt. Sir P. W. Bowyer-Smith) 6,830 tons, and some destroyers, were ordered to a position south of Crete, while the Commander-in-Chief, flying his flag in the battleship "Warspite" (Flag Capt. D. B. Fisher) 30,600 tons, and accompanied by the battleships "Valiant" (Capt. C. E. Morgan) 30,600 tons, and "Barham" (Flag Capt. G. C. Cooke) 31,100 tons, the aircraft carrier "Formidable" (23,000 tons), flying the flag of Rear-Admiral C. W. Boyd and commanded by Flag. Capt. A. W. Bissett, and a destroyer force, took to sea in a N.W. direction in the hope of intercepting the enemy forces and bringing them to action. At 7-49 a.m. on March 28 air reconnaissance reported an enemy force consisting of the battleship "Vittorio Veneto" (35,000 tons), six cruisers, and seven destroyers 35 miles south of Gavro Island (south of Crete), steering S.E., which was soon after joined by two more cruisers and two destroyers. At the time when the enemy fleet was seen Vice-Admiral Pridham-Whippell was 40 miles S.E. of the enemy and Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham about 95 miles S.E. of the British cruiser force. Vice-Admiral Pridham-Whippell's forces then altered course northwards and contacted enemy cruisers at 8.2 a.m., after which he turned his squadron S.E. to draw the enemy towards the main British fleet.

At 9 a.m. the Italian cruisers began to steam N.W. and Vice-Admiral Pridham-Whippell's force altered course accordingly and followed until, at 10-58 a.m., the "Vittorio Veneto" was seen 16 miles to the northward; the British cruiser force again steamed S.E. in order to keep out of range of the enemy's heavier guns and draw him towards the main British fleet. At 11-30 a.m. a torpedo attack was launched on the "Vittorio Veneto" by the Fleet Air Arm from H.M.S. "Formidable"; one possible hit was claimed. The effect of the attack was to cause the enemy to head off N.W. towards his bases. Shortly afterwards Vice-Admiral Pridham-Whippell's force met the main British fleet and all the British warships set off in pursuit of the enemy fleet 80 miles west of Gavro Island, comprising two "Cavour" class battleships (23,622 tons), three cruisers, and four destroyers. At about the same time the Fleet Air Arm launched a second attack on the enemy force, which included the "Vittorio Veneto." Touch with the enemy was temporarily lost during the afternoon but later regained, and between 3 and 5 p.m. heavy torpedo-attacks were launched by British naval aircraft, in which three hits were scored on the "Vittorio Veneto," two hits on a cruiser and probable hits on a second, and a direct hit on a destroyer; the "Vittorio Veneto's" speed was drastically reduced as a result, and Sir Andrew Cunningham ordered Vice-Admiral Pridham-Whippell to press on with his cruisers and regain touch with the enemy, which was done just after

dusk. At the same time a further Fleet Air Arm attack scored a hit on an enemy cruiser. While Vice-Admiral Pridham-Whippell led his destroyers to positions from which they were to commence the attack, the cruisers steamed to other positions N.E. At 10-10 p.m. it was reported to the Commander-in-Chief that the 10,000-ton Italian cruiser "Pola" was lying damaged and stopped three miles to port of the battle fleet's course. The main British force immediately turned to engage this unit, but suddenly the enemy cruisers "Fiume" and Zara" (each 10,000 tons) and a cruiser of the "Colleoni" class (5,069 tons)—believed to be the "Giovanni delle Bande Nere"—crossed the bows of the British fleet from starboard to port. At this moment H.M. destroyer "Greyhound" (Cmdr. W. R. Marshall-A'Deane) 1,335 tons, illuminated the leading cruiser; the British battleships immediately, from the close range of 4,000 yards, opened heavy concentrated salvos on the "Fiume" and "Zara", which were both shattered and blew up in flames. The destroyers H.M.S. "Havock" (Lieut. G. C. Watkins), 1,340 tons, and H.M.A.S. "Stuart" 1,350 tons, assisted with other destroyers to "mop up" the remnants of the enemy and aided in the sinking of the "Zara" and "Pola". The "Vittorio Veneto" apparently escaped during the action and was hunted by British destroyers; it appeared probable that during the night she became heavily engaged with her own forces, as heavy gunfire was heard at a time and from a direction which made it impossible for any British forces to be engaged. As

soon as it became possible that a fleet action might take place, a force of Greek destroyers steamed westward in the hope of intercepting enemy forces attempting to escape into the Adriatic, but the line of enemy retreat did not give them an opportunity to attack, and intensive air search in the morning failed to disclose any Italian ships, which must have escaped under cover of darkness.

The definite results of the action were that the cruisers "Fiume," "Pola" and "Zara"—the heaviest vessels of the Italian cruiser fleet, 10,000 tons, armed with 8-in. guns—were sunk, as well as the large destroyer "Vincenzo Gioberti" (1,729 tons) and the destroyer "Maestrale" (1,449 tons). In addition the cruiser "Giovanni delle Bande Nere" and the destroyer "Vittorio Alfieri" (1,729 tons) were probably sunk and the battleship "Vittorio Veneto" sustained serious under-water damage which, if she survived, would put her out of action for a considerable time. Not a British vessel was hit nor a single casualty suffered by the Royal Navy, and the only British losses in the battle of Cape Matapan were two Fleet Air Arm machines. Some 55 officers and 850 Italian seamen, as well as 35 German naval officers and ratings, were picked up from sunken enemy warships, and it was estimated that some 3,000 Italian officers and men, including Admiral Cantoni, commanding the Italian heavy cruiser squadron, perished. Several hundreds more Italian survivors would have been rescued but for ineffective Grman dive-bombing attacks, which caused the abandonment of rescue operations, two Junkers bombers being shot down. Admiral Cun-

ningham, however, signalled the position where rescue work had to be abandoned to the Italian C.-in-C., and received a reply from Admiral Riccardi thanking him and stating that a hospital ship had left Taranto the previous afternoon.

Italian naval strength was severely affected and Mussolini's navy, until its final ignominious surrender, was out of the war in so far as it could constitute any serious danger to British naval forces in the Mediterranean. British units could therefore carry out many useful actions in various parts of the "Italian Lake" without fear of interference, except from shore defences and aerial attack. Vitally important convoys were able to pass the narrows in mid-Mediterranean; Malta had to withstand continuous air attacks (to which a volume could be devoted), but thanks to the ineffectiveness of the Italian Navy, the island seldom went short, so far as supplies were concerned.

Before we deal with Britain's first successful offensive after the fall of France, in which the Italians were chased out of Egypt, let us examine for a moment the modern history of Libya and the nature of country in which so many hard-fought battles were to rage.

Conquered by the Italians during the war with Turkey in 1912 but almost lost again when fierce Senussi tribes overran the country during the Great War, Libya was finally pacified in the most brutal fashion—with the occupation in 1929 of the sacred oasis of Kufra by General Graziani. The country—at least in the east—is flat and stony; a thin layer of dusty soil covers large slabs of flat

rock; trees there are none and there is no vegetation, except near the coast, where there is some rainfall. The few wandering tribesmen journey from one water hole to another, eking out a miserable existence with what grain they can grow near the coastal areas. A feature of these great wastelands is the cisterns, which were hewn out of rock, originally by the Romans, to collect surface water. Most have silted up but some have gained world-wide prominence as the scenes of bitter struggles between the Allied forces and the Italians and then later the Germans. War-time life out there in the desert was desperately hard—dust was the bane of one's existence. Not only were men covered with it but vehicles also and at times visibility was reduced to almost five yards, while trenches, food, bedding, eyes, ears, nose and mouth became clogged with dust and mud.

During August there were definite signs of Italian activity and the 4th Indian Division moved out from the Nile Delta to support the 7th British Armoured Division. Time was spent in extensive training and in watching the enemy, certain units of the 4th Indian Division relieving some of the Armoured Division. That was towards the end of October and in the beginning of November the 7th Indian Infantry Brigade arrived.

Italian bombers frequently visited the British positions but did not do any great damage and were also kept in check by the R. A. F.

Meanwhile the Italians had been digging themselves in at Sidi Barrani and had almost connected this outpost by road from Fort Capuz-

zo, through Sollum and Buq Buq. A pipeline for water had also been laid; stores were plentiful and large defended camps had been established in the vicinity of Sidi Barrani and also along the line of communication to the west. These camps were strongly defended with mines, trenches, anti-tank obstacles, etc.

Early in the morning of December 6th the 4th Indian Division left their defensive positions and all day moved forward, hidden from the air by the thick dust, till by the afternoon they had gathered over a wide area 50 miles from their camps of the morning. They stayed in their new position for two nights and still they remained unobserved from the air. On December 7th orders were issued that showed that Sidi Barrani was their objective, and excitement ran high. Early next morning the advance was resumed and in bright, cold weather the attackers crept slowly on—again the huge body of troops moved forward another 50 miles—and still they were unobserved. This was very remarkable—it was due to a certain extent to luck but mainly to the extraordinary carelessness of the Italians. Whereas the Indian and British forces had been constantly on patrol, for months before, probing the enemy positions for valuable information—often staging quite considerable raids to obtain it—the Italians relied solely on air reconnaissance and in this they were hopelessly let down; the result was that when the full-scale attacks were started on the camps guarding Sidi Barrani, the Italians were often taken by surprise. They however fought at times with great determination and it was only

greater determination on the part of the attackers that won many a position. The thousands of Italian prisoners taken led one to think that the enemy made little effort to resist, but the explanation was that when in desert warfare troops are deprived of their transport—and the great precision with which the attackers' plans were carried out meant that the camps were quickly surrounded—they cannot easily retire on foot to other positions owing to water difficulties. If they attempt to do so, they soon die of thirst in the grimness of the desert.

The fight for Sidi Barrani itself started in the early hours of the 10th (on that day the 4th Indian Division received orders to move to the Sudan) and the story is told that, so as to bolster up morale the Italians, when they had originally taken this small fishing village, had let it be known that shortly after its occupation, the "electric trams were again running;" in reply to this, a message was received in Divisional Headquarters that British troops were soon in Sidi Barrani "stopping the trams."

The Italians were quickly thrown out of Egypt and the Army of the Nile continued their rapid advance along the Libyan coast. Sollum, Fort Capuzzo and Sidi-Omar fell, and after a harder struggle, Bardia was surrounded and captured. Italian prisoners were sent back to Egypt by the thousand, altogether 38,114 of the enemy having been captured by the end of December.

Marshal Graziani (Italian Commander-in-Chief in North Africa), in a report to Mussolini attempting to explain the Italian defeat, stated

that the British offensive had not been unexpected; it was made at a time when the Italians themselves were preparing to launch an attack in the Western Desert, and he advanced as reasons for the Italian *débâcle* the indifferent positions held by his troops, and that he was waiting for reinforcements (the Royal Navy were seeing to it that he got as few as possible). He described the battles as "most bloody."

With Bardia in his grasp Wavell's supply position was greatly relieved, as much material could be transported by sea, and he smashed his way on against the Italians, originally some 250,000 strong, but now reduced by one-third.

The R.A.F. were playing a big part in the offensive; they had gained almost complete mastery of the air and were pounding not only the Italians' supply routes, but also their main aerodromes.

Let us now, before proceeding further with the Libyan campaign, consider the general position on the other North African fronts.

At the outbreak of the war General Sir Archibald Wavell was in command of the British Imperial Forces, but the Supreme Commander of the Allied forces in the Middle East was General Weygand. With the fall of France, Wavell found himself in a most delicate position, with the French armies in Tunisia, Syria and French Somaliland no longer to depend on. The Italians had large armies, which had been prepared for years; in Libya and East Africa widely scattered, Imperial forces were stretched out from Kenya to the western borders of Egypt. True,

Italy's communications to Abyssinia, Eritrea and Italian Somaliland were cut, except by air, but for years vast quantities of equipment and stores had been poured into these colonies.

But despite the extremely delicate position in which he found himself, Wavell immediately started offensive patrolling on the Egyptian and Sudan frontiers. This work was backed up by what R.A.F. units there were in these areas and although hopelessly weak so far as the number of machines was concerned, the R. A. F. did gallant work at this vital stage.

The Italians did not start a serious advance till the autumn and they were allowed to occupy large stretches of desert in Kenya, the Sudan and Egypt which were useless to them and faced them with the great task of keeping up supplies.

Early in the winter it was decided that the Imperial forces should take the offensive and then followed an amazing series of victories which eventually led to the collapse of the Italian East African Empire.

The first real Italian advance in June, 1940, was into British Somaliland which was only defended by the Somaliland Camel Corps, a body of men whose main job had been to chase raiding parties. It was therefore decided not to put up any great defence in this area and, fighting strenuous rearguard actions, in which a heavy toll was taken of the enemy, a retreat was made to the port of Berbera.

In the latter part of January, 1941, there was good news from the various African battle-fronts. The Army of the Nile went on to cap-

ture Tobruk while the Imperial advance into Eritrea was making good progress. It was also announced that in the previous July a British mission had gone into Abyssinia to organise resistance there. They had penetrated some 400 miles and made contacts with Abyssinian patriots, to whom training was given in the use of modern weapons. It was also reported that arms had been smuggled into the country bearing the seal of H. M. Haile Selassie and the standard of revolt had been raised at Gojjam. An Abyssinian army was also training in the Sudan and the King had established himself at Khartoum. Finally on January 15th Haile Selassie crossed the frontier from the Sudan into Abyssinia at the head of his troops after five years of exile.

Then came the great news early in February, along with reports of steady progress in Eritrea, Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland, that following the capture of Derna, the Army of the Nile had taken a great leap forward and taken Benghazi, capital of Cyrenaica. This was accomplished by a brilliantly executed manœuvre involving a twofold attack, Australian troops pressing westward along the coast and British armoured units cutting enemy communications from the south. The Army of the Nile had thus in two months completed the conquest of the whole of Cyrenaica, the final phase, from Derna to Benghazi, being accomplished in only one week. The enemy had been taken completely by surprise by the rapidity of the advance and suffered enormous losses. To se-

cure Benghazi the Imperial forces had advanced over 500 miles in country practically devoid of good roads, water and food and threatened all the time by blinding sandstorms. About 150,000 prisoners had been taken, including 19 generals and an admiral, and a vast amount of war material and stores. The Imperial casualties were less than 2,000.

On the Eritrean front Keren, which was to be the scene of bloody fighting, came into the news, Imperial forces early in February gradually working themselves into a position to storm this almost impregnable fortress. Elsewhere on the Italian East African front the Imperial forces were making excellent progress. On March 16th it was announced that Berbera, capital of British Somaliland, had been recaptured after seven months of enemy occupation, and the whole of British Somaliland was soon taken from the Italians.

In the Keren area bitter fighting continued, the Italians putting up stout resistance despite heavy losses, and Indian troops doing some magnificent fighting in this mountainous country. Elsewhere in East Africa Imperial and Patriot forces made progress, particularly in Western and Southern Abyssinia.

Finally, on March 26th, it was announced that Indian and Scottish troops, under constant shell-fire and greatly outnumbered, ascending almost vertical mountainous positions, had entered Keren. It was estimated that one-third of the Italian armies in East Africa, numbering some 60,000—70,000, had defended this key position, which guarded the way to Asmara, capital of Eri-

trea, which soon also fell. There was in addition good news from Abyssinia, where South African troops had entered Addis Ababa after one of the most rapid advances in modern history, covering over 700 miles of wild and mountainous country in one day under four weeks. The Abyssinian capital was thus freed after almost five years of Italian occupation. It was now evident that Rome's East African Empire was at an end, and on May 19th it was announced that, after allowing the Italian forces at Amba Alagi one full day to collect their wounded, the formal surrender of this, one of the last centres of organized Italian resistance in East Africa, had taken place. It was interesting to note that whereas in 1935-36 the Italians took seven months to advance 425 miles to Addis Ababa, the Imperial forces in 1941 took only 94 days to cover 1,500 miles to Amba Alagi from the commencement of the East African offensive.

But the good news from Italian East Africa was offset at the beginning of April by the announcement that in the face of a German-Italian advance, Benghazi had been evacuated. It was officially pointed out that "in desert warfare it was not the policy to capture towns but to prevent armies from being scooped up, as the Italian army had been by General Wavell." It was also stated that the enemy would be allowed to penetrate eastwards "till he reaches a point where we are satisfied that we can give battle with the assurance of success." It was stated that Benghazi was useless to either side and the sole object of warfare in the desert wastes was to "punish the

enemy by inflicting the greatest possible damage to his men and material with the ultimate object of wearing him down."

But taken along with the latest news from the Balkans—Germany's onslaught on Yugoslavia and Greece—there was keen disappointment over the withdrawal from Benghazi.

However, the Imperial forces were able to retreat in orderly fashion and soon Tobruk, where the great stand was made, came into the news. There was much sharp fighting in the vicinity of Tobruk and at the famous "Hell-fire Pass", but before I tell of the next big happening in the Middle East—operations against Syria—and then the regrouping of the Imperial forces for another offensive into Libya, let me recall one outstanding incident in the retreat from Benghazi which formed the subject of a B. B. C. talk and was one of the most thrilling episodes of the North African fighting. The story as broadcast is as follows :—

I am going to tell you the adventure of a gallant garrison and it's one of the finest stories of reckless courage that have come out of that vast, bleak theatre of war known as the Western Desert. The scene of this particular story is the stone and mud fort of Mekili. It's in the rocky desert approximately halfway between Tobruk and Benghazi. It's really not much of a fort and the defensive trenches which had been dug round it some months before by its previous occupants were at this time more than half filled with sand. But the fort was important at that stage because it was a supply dump full of military stores, food

and petrol, and there were wells within it.

So, when the enemy began his push toward Benghazi, an Indian motor brigade which was then at El Adem aerodrome, near Tobruk, was ordered to Mekili. This brigade was composed of Indian motorised cavalry and an Australian anti-tank regiment. Altogether thirteen hundred fighting men. The brigade had not been in action, but it was commanded by a Brigadier who had proved himself a very gallant and dashing soldier during our advance into Cyrenaica. The brigade spent the night of its arrival and the next day trying to get the four-mile perimeter of the fort into a state of defence by clearing the old trenches and digging new ones. Towards the evening, enemy aircraft came over on a survey and at night our patrols contacted the enemy fifteen miles to the south-west and there was other news that enemy vehicles were only five miles to the north-west. Well, that didn't sound too happy for this comparatively small garrison. However, reinforcements from an armoured division were known to be on the way and all seemed reasonably well. But in the early hours of the morning, vehicles of a transport company bumped into the enemy, east of Mekili. This incident passed off quite successfully thanks to the action of a very determined captain. His convoy consisted of three vehicles and five men with a total armament of a pistol and three rifles. But the captain drove straight at the Italians and he returned to the Fort with an Italian officer, six men and a Breda gun in tow. So far, so good! But what

were the enemy doing east of Mekili on the road to Tobruk?

That was a worrying question for it was the first indication that the Fort was being surrounded.

The next morning began quietly. Then about noon, 14 very large enemy aircraft appeared, circled the Fort and landed at a desert aerodrome only a few miles away. Soon afterwards a reconnaissance patrol reported that a large enemy column with guns was on the aerodrome and that another column was working round the escarpment apparently to cut off a possible withdrawal to the east. The brigade had no guns heavier than two-pounder anti-tank guns and the situation looked a bit sticky, when the enemy columns on the aerodrome began to move towards the Fort, drawing field-guns. But the Australians opened fire and the enemy withdrew. However, one gun was brought closer and the machine-gun section of the cavalry were sent out to deal with it. Unfortunately, the gun was swung round and our machine-gun was put out of action and some of the crew killed and wounded.

Then came the first of the many courageous actions that characterised this fierce battle. An officer jumped into a truck by himself, drove up to the wrecked machine-gun and brought back the survivors. Later, the same officer was in a truck with a signalman when a German staff car appeared. He turned the truck round and drove off with the German car in hot pursuit. He led it to a point where he knew it was covered by machine-guns, then stopped, came alongside and

demanded the surrender of the Germans, which he got. But now the enemy was growing bolder and there was no sign of the promised reinforcements.

At six o'clock that night, enemy armoured cars tried to force their way from the south-west, but they had to retire in face of one of our patrols, but half an hour later they managed to establish a gun, and began to shell our lines. The commanding officer of the Indian regiment gave the order to move that gun and while one troop opened long-range machine-gun fire on it, another section crawled up a wadi—that's a dried up river bed—towards it. Unfortunately, just as the section sprang to its feet and started a bayonet charge, the gun, and the 40 Italians with it, removed themselves at high speed.

I may say that if there's one thing the Italians dislike, it's a bayonet with an Indian behind it.

During the night the enemy continued to try to break in, but they were beaten off by machine-gun fire. All the same, it was an anxious night for the small but determined garrison. At last the promised reinforcements arrived, and these turned out to consist of one cruiser tank and some armoured vehicles. As light came, the brigade observed 30 to 40 enemy lorries to the east and 12 guns in full view about 4,000 yards away. At 8-15 in the morning one of our aircraft flew over and dropped a note informing the brigade that it was surrounded on all sides, and that strong enemy columns were moving up on the east and from the south.

Soon afterwards a German staff officer arrived in an armoured car under a white flag, and demanded the unconditional surrender of the garrison. He said it would be a perfectly honourable surrender as the garrison was surrounded by immensely superior forces, and would be bombed and shelled to pieces if it refused. The Brigadier refused! The enemy then began to advance from the south, and for a short time the tide flowed our way, and we gave a very hot reception to Italian and German vehicles which approached. At midday the German envoy returned again, and demanded the surrender; and again the Brigadier refused.

But the fact could not be overlooked that the garrison was surrounded by superior forces, and that its position was precarious. To emphasize this the enemy began a very heavy shelling attack which lasted for an hour, and this was followed by infantry attacks. These were beaten off by withering machine-gun fire, and the Italians withdrew, leaving many dead on the field. Two tanks which tried to creep in were also driven off by direct hits. The enemy then began another heavy bombardment. What was to be done? There was a conference at midnight, and it was decided that an attempt was to be made to break through the enemy lines at dawn. The night passed in preparation, accompanied by enemy shelling and a couple of unsuccessful infantry attacks.

At 6-30 a.m. it was still dark, when a charge by the tank and a squadron of the cavalry was ordered. Cannon to right of them—cannon to

left of them. The cruiser tank was destroyed by the second shell fired; the cavalry squadron, 100 men in 34 open unarmoured trucks, went straight on in line with the guns—split half to left and half to right—dismounted, and went in with the bayonet. It was a wonderfully heroic performance, and two acts stand out.

A young lad of 18—Sowar Addarram—was in the lead in the bayonet charge. His left arm was blown off above the elbow, but without hesitation he went up to his squadron commander, thrust his rifle, bayonet and ammunition into his arms, saying, "You take these, sir, I can't use them." He then picked up a bayonet which he used with his remaining hand, and went on to the attack. His friend—Sowar Jed-Ram—another boy of 18, charged straight at a group of the enemy; he was overpowered and dropped to the ground. During the struggle he unfixed his bayonet, and killed or wounded several of the enemy and got free.

I am glad to tell you that the boy who lost his arm has now recovered, and that both of these spirited youngsters have been awarded the Indian Distinguished Service Medal.

The Italians had no stomach for this hand-to-hand fighting, and most of them retreated. Having destroyed 4 or 5 guns, our gallant squadron em-bussed and made off. Its total casualties, after what was surely a historic feat of arms, were no more than 27, of whom 15 were killed or missing.

Meanwhile, under cover of this gallant diversion, the main body attempted to break through.

It was just daybreak—but the clouds of dust raised by the vehicles, and the glare of bursting shells, the red streak of tracer bullets, and the flames leaping from the burning vehicles, reduced visibility to a few yards. It was impossible to proceed as a formed body, and the trucks charged through the enemy lines, as one observer graphically put it to me, "like a herd of stampeding cattle." Many men never got through. Among those who didn't was the Brigadier, who was captured; the brigade major was last seen on foot, machine-gun under one arm, an anti-tank rifle under another, refusing a lift.

In all this wild tumult of death and destruction our men were amazingly cool. Trucks stopped to take each other in tow and to pick up walking wounded; although vehicles were overloaded to capacity, there was no thought of leaving anyone behind. The individual stories of heroism are too numerous to relate, but I must mention Major Robin Anthony Eden and Major Katchkumar Shri-Rad-Ranjitsinghi. Rad-Ranjitsinghi led 60 men out of the murderous melée, and later he and his small band joined up with Major Eden who had an artillery battery and small detachments of other units. Eden and his men, coming from another engagement, had been marching across the desert toward A. . . 160 miles away, and had been surrounded by the enemy and asked to surrender. But he had courageously refused, and managed to extricate his troops.

The two officers and the men met in a wadi, and together—250 strong—they began their long

and dangerous trek across the desert. The Indian major went ahead to reconnoitre on foot and throughout the march he was continually in the forefront, and twice, when the column was attacked by the enemy, he led his men in a truck, revolver in hand, drove them off, and even captured 32 prisoners. The combination he showed of calm initiative and bearing inspired both British and Indian troops.

Well, this small force, banded together in the arid heat of the desert, by force of circumstances, into a fighting unit, reached Tobruk in fighting order. It is a tribute, not only to individual bravery of the highest order, but to all who took part, that these two majors have both been awarded the Distinguished Service Order. Altogether 100 vehicles, with 10 Australian anti-tank guns, reached Tobruk after a desert march of 150 miles. The Indian Motor Brigade will long remember its first experience of action against the enemy—it will think with regret of the loss of some good comrades, but whenever the name Mekili is mentioned, it can hold its head up proudly.

It was announced on May 2nd that a concentration of Iraqi troops round Habbaniyah (an R. A. F. station 60 miles west of Baghdad) had led to a clash with the British forces stationed there. The statement recalled that when Rashid Ali el Gailani, supported by certain army leaders, had seized power in Iraq a month before, he had announced his intention of honouring the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of Alliance; consequently, when H. M. Government notified their desire to open the

line of communication through Iraq for British forces, he agreed and troops landed at Basra. But some days later when a further contingent was notified, the Iraqi authorities expressed their unwillingness for fresh British troops to arrive in the country before those that had already arrived had passed through. Incidents followed, Iraqi troops opening fire on the aerodrome at Habbaniyah, where some aircraft were destroyed and the Iraqi positions were then bombed. There was sharp fighting at several places and Rashid Ali was declared a pro-Axis "Quisling", and it was announced that the Saudi Arabian Government and the Iranian Government had refused to give any assistance to him.

On May 15, Mr. Eden stated in the House of Commons that the French authorities in Syria were allowing German aircraft to use Syrian aerodromes as staging posts for flights to Iraq and H. M. Government had given full authority for action against German aircraft on these aerodromes. The French Government could not escape responsibility for the situation; there had been a clear breach of the Armistice terms.

It was officially stated that Rashid Ali had made an appeal to the Axis, and a number of German aircraft, bearing French markings and escorted by French fighters, had flown across Syria to Iraq, bringing propagandist agitators and other similar Axis specialists.

Events then came rapidly to a head. General Dentz, High Commissioner for Syria, stated on May 16th that "German aircraft in recent

days have made forced landings at Syrian airfields," and when R. A. F. attacks started on the Syrian aerodromes, he declared that they would "meet force with force."

Meanwhile a warning was given to the Vichy Government by Mr. Eden in the House of Commons regarding this "new and sinister development in Vichy policy." He said that the Pétain Government had started on a course which must place the resources and territories of France and her Empire increasingly at the disposal of a Power "which is the enemy not only of France's former ally but of France herself."

On May 23rd it was announced that Rashid Ali's rebellion had collapsed and Abdul Ilah, Regent of Iraq, whom he had deposed had returned to the country. The rapid advance of British and Imperial forces on Baghdad had led to Rashid Ali's flight and an armistice was made and a new cabinet was formed by the Regent.

But it was reported that there had been fresh German infiltration into Syria and a virulent attack was made on Britain by Admiral Darlan who was openly showing his pro-German sympathies and this attack was followed by a changed tone in the French Press and radio, which abandoned any pretence of neutrality and came out more and more as instruments of German propaganda.

There was considerable unrest in Syria itself as more German aircraft arrived at Syrian aerodromes and the country was literally flooded with German "tourists".

At last, on June 8th, it was announced that

Free French troops, with the support of Imperial forces, had entered Syria and the Lebanon and at the same time a proclamation was issued by General Catroux on behalf of de Gaulle guaranteeing the liberty and independence of both territories.

In Vichy it was stated that there were no German troops in Syria and described the entry of Allied forces as a "fresh unjustifiable act of aggression against the French Empire," which would be "defended to the last."

At first the Allied advance went on fairly smoothly till Vichy resistance became stiffer and bitter fighting took place in many sectors despite repeated appeals by the Free French forces to their countrymen not to resist. The first big victory was the capture on June 21st by Free French troops of Damascus.

At last Churchill informed the Commons on July 9th that General Dentz had asked terms for an armistice, the Premier expressing pleasure at the prospect of the termination of hostilities in which from 1,000-1,500 Empire troops had been killed and wounded. "Cease fire" was finally ordered at midnight on July 11-12.

But the Allies' troubles in the Middle East were not over for Iran became the next scene of Nazi intrigue and on the morning of August, 25th British and Russian forces crossed the frontiers after repeated warnings which the Iranian Government had ignored. The Germans in Iran, numbering 2,000-3,000, most of them employed in vital services such as roads and railways, had been actively engaged in trying to undermine the Allied positions in the country. For the defence

of the whole Middle East and also as far as India, it was vitally necessary that German influence should be rooted out of Iran, and after three days of hostilities a new cabinet was formed and undertakings were given to both the Russian and British Governments. But great dissatisfaction was expressed at the dilatoriness of the Iranian Government in carrying out their undertakings, especially the expulsion of Axis nationals, and British and Russian troops advanced to the outskirts of Teheran on September 17th, the Shah having abdicated the previous day in favour of his son.

All through the summer of '41 Tobruk held out stubbornly against repeated enemy attacks and the R. A. F. kept up a ceaseless pounding of German-Italian bases in North Africa till the stage was set for a fresh Allied offensive.

In mid-November came the brief announcement that British forces in the Western Desert had been constituted as the Eighth Army. This decision did not gain much prominence at the time, but soon the Eighth was to start its first big offensive, later on, under the command of Montgomery, to become the most famous army in the world. But the Eighth's varying fortunes must be reserved for another volume.

CHAPTER IV

CONTINENTAL MANOEUVRES

THE object of this chapter is to trace the course of events on the Continent from the fall of France till the outbreak of Russia's war with Germany.

By the middle of 1940 a sharp turn towards the Axis was witnessed in the Balkans—Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria becoming hotbeds of Fascist intrigue. In the far North, Finland was being prepared as a springboard for the Germans against the Soviet while attempts were also being made to draw the Baltic States into the Axis net. Russia soon took steps to safeguard her frontiers on the Baltic and also against Rumania.

Before I therefore deal in detail with Germany's activities in the East prior to her onslaught on Russia, I shall touch on two points—1. The attitude of Spain and 2. the start of Britain's air offensive against Germany.

On the fall of France Britain turned anxious eyes towards Spain—would Franco and his Fascist government seize the opportunity for an adventure in the Mediterranean? But no matter what Franco and his lieutenants might have wanted to do, their country was in too weak a state after the terrible years of civil war to engage in fresh fighting, so instead, Spain intimated a policy of "non-belligerency" on Italy's entry into the war—that of course did not mean that they would not help their Fascist friends to

the utmost. No official definition of the term "non-belligerency" was given but the Spanish press, with a typical comment such as this—"From her non-belligerency Spain may respect all the combatants, but cannot sincerely hide her joy and sympathy for her two great friends"—made it perfectly clear that Madrid was keen to do all that was possible for Germany and Italy.

Following her declaration, Spain on June 14th sent an occupying force into the international zone of Morocco. It was explained that this had been done to maintain the neutrality of the zone, that the international administration would be continued and that the occupation was "provisional". About this time references were also made in the press to Gibraltar and the need for that "problem" to be settled.

Regarding the second point, despite the great task of saving her island from invasion, Britain was also striking back—not only against objectives inside Germany, but also on German naval bases, along with persistent attacks on the invasion ports and enemy shipping, while Italy was getting her share of R. A. F. raids. We are concerned here mainly with the attacks on Germany. They were carried on consistently from June 1940 and with ever-increasing violence and though they could not be said to be having any great effect on enemy morale, they led to an ever-increasing irritability in Germany. Had Goering not promised his countrymen that "not a single British bomb will be allowed to fall on Reich territory"?—and when they did fall,

there was an evacuation of certain areas and shelter-construction had to be rushed ahead. Reports from the Reich during that period left no doubt that morale was definitely bad in Hamburg, Bremen and Kiel. This was shown by the fact that on the nights of March 12-13 and 13-14, 1941, the main railway station at Hamburg had to be closed in view of the fact that the numbers of people trying to leave the city had got out of control.

Here are a few extracts from the official publication "Bomber Command" telling of the offensive against Germany up to July 1941.

It was stated:

"During the operations in France and Flanders the R. A. F. concentrated on rail communications and oil targets in Germany, notably at Munchen-Gladbach, Hamburg, Bremen, Duisburg, Misburg (near Hanover), and elsewhere; dislocation was caused to enemy communications, some oil stocks destroyed, and refineries damaged, but the German war machine was not seriously affected and continued, at the cost of some increased effort, to supply the land armies in the West. With the collapse of France, Bomber Command found itself responsible for most of the offensive operations against the enemy and immediately commenced the 'Second Phase' of the air war, lasting approximately from June 18, to Dec. 5, 1940. Four main types of target were attacked in this period: aircraft factories, aluminium plants, oil plants and refineries, and communications. A start was made by bombing the Focke-Wulff works at Bremen (June-July, 1940),

other targets being Deichshausen (where the Ju. 52 is manufactured), Gotha (home of the Me. 110), Kassel, Cologne, Rheinfelden, Bitterfeld, Grevenbroich, Lünen, and Ludwigshafen. Oil refineries at Gelsenkirchen, Leuna, Misburg, Emmerich, Politz (Stettin) and elsewhere were attacked with great success, Emmerich and Misburg being put out of production for a considerable time. As regards communications, the primary targets were the elaborate canal-road-rail systems in the Ruhr; particularly noteworthy were the destruction of an aqueduct on the important Dortmund-Ems Canal in August and heavy damage to the Hamm marshalling yards (attacked 89 times between June, 1940—June, 1941); an example of the dislocation caused was that in October passengers from Berlin to Cologne had to change 12 times. More unusual targets were concealed munitions dumps in the Black Forest, Harz, Thüringen and Grünewald forests, where large numbers of "incendiary leaves" were dropped and great explosions caused. Occasionally important results were obtained by sheer chance, as when a solitary Hampden which lost its way bombed a railway junction in Germany and happened to hit the Berlin-Hague express in motion, causing heavy loss of life, or when the Norddeutscher Lloyd s.s. "Bremen" was hit and almost certainly burned out in a raid on Bremen in March, 1941. By December, 1940, the greatly increased strength of Bomber Command, the greater numbers of air-crews coming into service, caused the weight of the attack to be shifted to special areas where industry and transport are concentrated. The first Ger-

man city to be bombed in this manner was Düsseldorf (Dec. 4-5, 1940). A recapitulation of some of the damage done to German cities follows :—

"Kiel : severe damage to the Deutsche Werke and Germania shipyards, much of which are completely demolished; the power plant and gasworks put out of action; a large area in Kohlenstrasse and Holsteinstrasse completely gutted; serious damage in various parts of the city and considerable dislocation of public services.

"Wilhelmshaven : three naval barracks destroyed, many casualties between Jan. 29—Feb. 4, 1941, severe damage in Bauhafen area.

"Emden : the first German town to receive the new British H. E. bombs; two were dropped on the night of March 31—April 1, 1941, one falling near the Post Office and Telephone Exchange and the other in the old part of the town; the German High Command themselves admitted 'impressive damage' and the British Air Ministry reported that 'houses took to the air.'

"Bremen : damage to Focke-Wulff aircraft factories; slips at Atlas shipyards and nearby storage depots burned out in January; over 1,000 people killed and many thousands injured in raids in January-February, which were so severe that special fire-fighting squads had to be rushed from Hamburg to cope with the situation; severe damage to the Neptune and Vegesack yards and main railway station; the liner 'Bremen' probably burned out, the 'Europa' damaged, and two ships loaded with iron and steel sunk in harbour.

"Hamburg: much devastation; about half city's petrol stocks destroyed, one power house put out of action, a large liner and a naval vessel sunk, large cotton and rubber stores and 10,000 tons of wheat destroyed, heavy damage to bridge over the Elbe, largest dry dock made unusable, several gas containers destroyed, damage to motor-works which took three months to repair, railway station hit, Blohm and Voss yards damaged, a chemical factory and margarine factory wrecked, particularly severe casualties on the nights of March 12-13 and 13-14 in the Altstadt and Neustadt districts, much damage in city's business centre, including Law Courts, Stock Exchange, and head offices of Hamburg-Amerika Line; in the German press, advertisements appeared for workmen to be employed on 'the rebuilding of Hamburg.'

"Cologne: damage to Deutz engineering works, city's power station burned out, 10,000,000 marks' worth of goods destroyed at Bonntor goods yard, main station and Hohenzollern Bridge hit, heavy damage in harbour area, main lines to Bonn, Aachen and Düsseldorf damaged.

"Düsseldorf: almost a whole district burned to the ground with heavy casualties; particularly heavy damage and casualties on night of Dec. 7-8, 1940; a steel works wiped out; main station and a silk factory damaged; and a large factory research department, a patent food factory, paper mill and many warehouses destroyed.

"Hanover: severe damage throughout city; main motor factory stopped work for some time, railway station damaged, naphtha plant and

Continental Gummiwerke (Germany's chief rubber factory) seriously damaged, Misburg oil refineries heavily hit.

"Mannheim: inland harbour heavlly hit, Benz motor works brought to a standstill, five loaded barges sunk, extensive damage to railway with dislocation of traffic, involving loss of 100,000 tons of Silesian coal to Italy last winter, an aniline dye works badly damaged, seven factories forced to stop work, a shipyard burned out and 160 workers killed (in January last), sawmills and timber-yards of Schütte-Lanz completely destroyed

"Munster, called by the Germans *die unglückliche Stadt* (the unhappy city), bombed for five successive nights in July, 1941; most of the city wiped out, and twice set on fire from end to end.

"Aachen: one-third of the city wiped out.

"Berlin: hits scored on Neuköln, Alexanderplatz and Pariserplatz; Lehrter, Anhalter and Stettiner stations hit on different occasions; considerable damage to and dislocation of the Underground system from hits near the Savigny Platz; General Post Office gutted; a number of factories damaged, some burned out near Lehrter station; severe damage to Siemens works (N. W. Berlin) on different occasions; heavy damage in Weissensee district; considerable damage in Unter den Linden and Sieges-Allee; bomb hits on Brandenburger Tor, the Law Courts, barracks at Charlottenburg (completely destroyed), a big departmental store on Alexanderplatz (burned out), arsenal in Friedrichsplatz (blown up), the

old Royal Palace, the Opera House (wiped out), the War Museum, old Royal Stables, an S. S. barracks in Grosslichterfelde (destroyed), and heavy damage near the Witzleben station by new H. E. bombs. Much more damage has been done in German cities than has been briefly outlined above.''

And now let us turn to the Russians' precautions on their Western frontiers.

It will be remembered that they had already made agreements with Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia but it appears that they got knowledge that Germany was hard at work in the Baltic States and so Soviet troops entered Lithuania on June 15th, occupying Kaunas (the capital), Vilna and other towns, following the acceptance of an ultimatum handed over the previous day by M. Molotov. This demanded free access for Soviet troops into Lithuania, resignation of the Lithuanian Government and the trial of the Minister of the Interior, Molotov accusing the country of violating the Soviet-Lithuanian Pact by entering into a military alliance with Latvia and Estonia which he contended was directed against the U. S. S. R. and alleging that the kidnapping of Soviet soldiers in Lithuania had been done with the connivance of officials.

The ultimatum was immediately accepted and a new government was formed.

On June 16th ultimatums requiring immediate change of government and the free passage of troops into Latvia and Estonia, in order to guarantee the fulfilment of the Soviet-Latvia and Soviet-Estonian mutual assistance pacts of 1939,

were handed to the respective ministers in Moscow The notes stated that Latvia and Estonia had violated their pacts with the U. S. S. R. because they had not cancelled their military alliance and had even extended it by including Lithuania and attempting to include Finland. Both governments accepted the ultimatums and Red Army troops entered the two countries.

The establishment of Left-wing governments friendly to the Soviet Union in the three Baltic States in June was followed on July 14th by elections in those countries for new National Assemblies. In each country the electoral procedure adopted was similar to that operating in the U. S. S. R., viz., a single list of peasants', workers', and soldiers' candidates, no opposition lists being permitted. The electoral programmes were also identical in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—alliance with the Soviet Union; democratisation of the armed forces; a "purge" of representatives of the former régime from State and municipal posts; suppression of Fascist press organs and organisations; increased wages; social insurance; distribution of land to landless peasants; a moratorium on all peasant debts to the State; the right of free speech; and the right to strike.

Over 90 per cent of the electorate voted for this programme in each State. In Latvia the "workers' block" obtained 1,151,000 votes, 97.6 per cent of the total votes cast, while in Lithuania 80 per cent of the deputies returned were members of the Communist Party.

The newly-elected National Assemblies un-

animously voted in favour of the union of their countries with the U. S. S. R. on July 21. In Latvia, nationalisation of the land, the banks, and large business enterprises commenced on July 23, and similar measures were taken in Lithuania and Estonia to bring those countries into alignment with the Soviet system. Mass demonstrations of peasants, workers, and soldiers took place in Latvia and Lithuania at which Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov and other Russian leaders were acclaimed and union with the U. S. S. R. demanded.

Russia also realised that the Balkans, particularly Rumania, would be used by the Germans in a future attack on the Soviet, so Moscow presented an ultimatum to Rumania on June 26, demanding the cession to the U. S. S. R. of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina and asking for a reply on the following day.

As far back as 1812 Bessarabia had belonged to Russia when it was ceded by the Ottoman Empire. It was seized by the Rumanians after the Revolution in 1917. Bukovina, originally a Moldavian province, was ceded by the Ottoman Empire to Austria in 1777. It was administered by the Austro-Hungarian Empire till 1919, when on the dissolution of the Dual Monarchy, it passed to Rumania.

The Rumanians prior to the Soviet demands had been rapidly falling under Axis influence, culminating in the formation of a new government in which members of the Iron Guard were included and following which many belonging to

this Fascist organization were released. Jews were debarred from the new government.

After a meeting of the Crown Council presided over by King Carol, the Rumanian Government informed the U. S. S. R. of their willingness to agree to the Soviet demands but asked that negotiations should take place. This proposal was rejected by the Soviet Government, which demanded the evacuation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina within four days, beginning at 2 p.m. on June 28, and their immediate occupation by Soviet troops. The U. S. S. R. further proposed that representatives of both countries should meet to discuss questions arising out of the evacuation of the territories demanded. At 11 a.m. on June 28 the Rumanian Minister in Moscow informed the Soviet Government that his Government accepted the Russian demands unconditionally.

Later that day Russian troops crossed the frontier and occupied Kishinev (Chisinau), the Bessarabian capital, Akkerman (Cetatea Alba), and Czernowitz (Cernauti), capital of Bukovina, as well as Balti and other Bessarabian towns. Red Army troops were landed at these and other places by plane, and numbers of Soviet tanks and mechanised units rapidly advanced into the ceded areas while the Rumanian Army withdrew simultaneously. The Soviet Legation in Bucharest announced that Russian troops would occupy all Bessarabia to the mouth of the Danube, and Northern Bukovina to a point on the River Suceava 40 miles south of the Russo-Rumanian frontier; it was also announced that a mixed

commission would meet in Odessa to delimit the new frontiers.

Following the acceptance of the Soviet demands the Rumanian Premier, M. Tatarescu, reorganised his Cabinet.

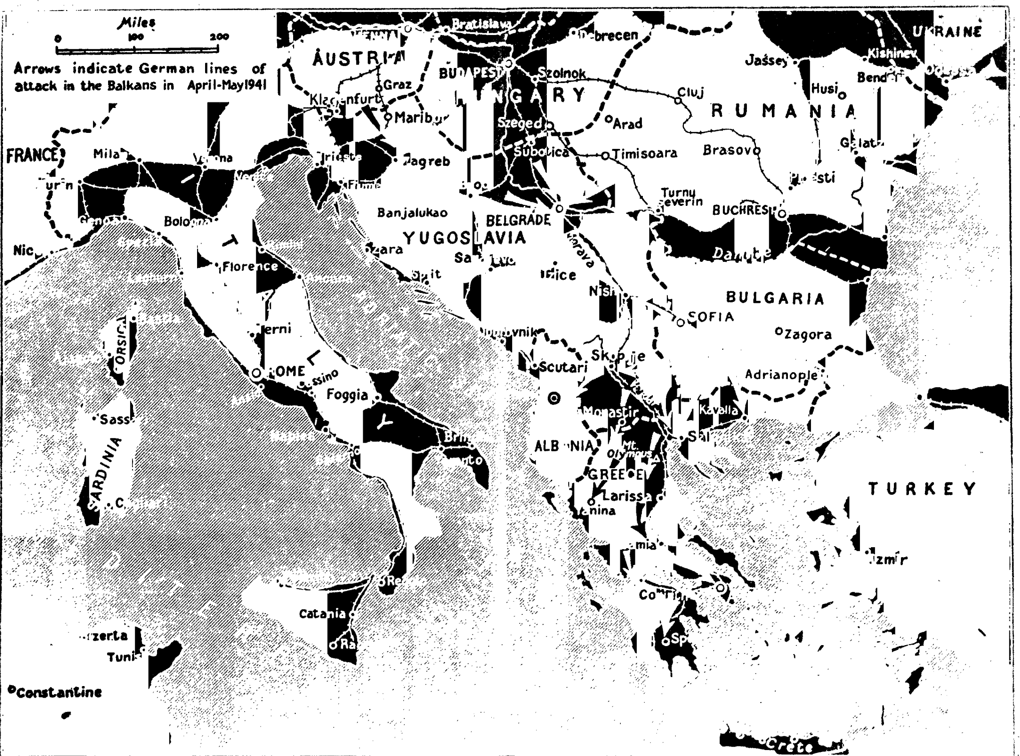
The text of the Soviet Note of June 26 was published in Moscow on June 28. It declared that in 1918 "Rumania took advantage of the military weakness of Russia and robbed the U. S. S. R. by force of part of her territory—namely, Bessarabia—and thus broke the century-old unity of Bessarabia (principally occupied by Ukrainians) and the Ukrainian Soviet Republic." The military weakness of the Soviet Union belonged to the past and the international situation demanded the most speedy solution of unsolved problems which existed as an inheritance from the past in order to lay the foundation of a permanent peace between States. Accordingly, the Soviet Union considered it "necessary and timely" to solve the question of Bessarabia. At the same time they declared that the question was organically connected with the return of "that part of Bukovina where the predominant majority is connected with the Soviet Ukraine by common historical destinies, as well as through the similarities of their language and national composition." The Soviet Government therefore proposed (1) the return of Bessarabia and (2) the transference of Northern Bukovina.

General mobilisation of the Rumanian armed forces began at midnight on June 27-28. Meanwhile the Soviet advance into the ceded areas continued at a rapid pace and on July 2

it was announced that the occupation of the territories had been completed well ahead of the scheduled time. A feature of the Soviet occupation was the use of parachute troops, who occupied a number of points in advance of the Soviet mechanised forces. It was announced in Bucharest on June 30 that several serious clashes, involving many casualties, had occurred between Russian and Rumanian troops owing to the speed of the Soviet advance, and at one point because Soviet troops in Bukovina advanced beyond the ceded area agreed on; these units were, however, later withdrawn.

Thousands of refugees left Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina with the retreating Rumanian armies, while at the same time many Bessarabians and Jews from other parts of Rumania set forth for the occupied territories. The Rumanian Government gave facilities for Bessarabians (Ukrainians) and Communists to depart for the new Soviet territories from other parts of Rumania. Clashes and demonstrations between Rumanian Communists and the Rumanian civil authorities were reported from several places in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, notably at Cernauti (Czernowitz), where the Soviet troops of occupation took steps to suppress looting.

The German radio announced on June 27th that the Russian demands on Rumania were of no interest to the Reich, whose interests in the Balkans were purely economic. Nevertheless it was unofficially reported on June 30 that King Carol had appealed to Hitler, and that the latter had advised him to "accept anything for the time


Miles
0
100
200
Arrows indicate German lines of attack in the Balkans in April-May 1941
FRANCE
AUSTRIA
Bratislava
BUDAPEST
Szolnok
Cluj
RUMANIA
Jassey
Husi
Bender
UKRAINE
Kishinev
Graz
Maribor
Szeged
Arad
Subotica
Timisoara
Brasov
Jagreb
Turnu Severin
BUCHREST
Banjalukao
BELGRADE
YUGOSLAVIA
Florence
BULGARIA
SOFIA
Zagora
Scutari
Adrianople
Foggia
Kavalla
ALBANIA
Mt. Olympus
Larissa
TURKEY
Catania
Constantine
SARDINIA
Sass
Nic
Turin
Bolo
Monastir
Crete

being''. In Bulgaria, the Russian move was approved by the Press and the public although no official declaration was made. The Hungarian attitude was indicated by the official "Pester Lloyd," which wrote (June 28): "A dissolution of the Rumanian State is taking place, and the treaties of Trianon and Versailles are falling under the same blows. New principles are at work in the reorganisation of Europe. It may be that we cannot halt the trend of events." On June 27 Count Teleki and Count Csaky, the Premier and Foreign Minister, saw the German and Italian Ministers in Budapest, after which a Cabinet meeting was held.

It was officially stated in Bucharest on July 1st that clashes had occurred on both the Hungarian and Bulgarian frontiers, and it was announced from Budapest that a protest had been made to the Rumanian Government against frontier incidents in which Hungarian civilians were alleged to have been killed; the cancellation of army and police leave was also reported from Hungary, while considerable troop concentrations on both sides of the Hungarian-Rumanian frontier were mentioned. Unofficial reports said that King Carol had asked Mussolini to exercise a restraining influence on Hungary and Bulgaria against the possible presentation of revisionist claims to Transylvania and the Southern Dobruja respectively.

The formal renunciation of the Anglo-French guarantee to Rumania was announced on July 1st by M. Tatarescu, and it was officially stated that in future Rumanian foreign policy

would be aligned with "the new orientation in Europe."

On July 4th a new Rumanian cabinet was formed, including Iron Guard and anti-Semitic members.

Towards the end of August it was announced that Rumania had agreed to hand over Southern Dobruja to Bulgaria. This area of 2,956 square miles had been awarded to Bulgaria by the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 but in the Second Balkan War (1913) Bulgaria had been obliged to cede the territory to Rumania. She recovered it for a short time during the Great War but lost it again in 1919.

Then came the "Vienna Award" by which Rumania lost a big slice of territory to Hungary.

Following the visits paid to Berchtesgaden and Rome at the end of July by the Rumanian Premier and Foreign Minister, when they were urged to seek an early settlement with Hungary over the Transylvanian question, it was officially announced in Bucharest on Aug. 15th that Hungary's territorial claims against Rumania had been presented. On the following day Hungarian and Rumanian delegations, headed respectively by M. Andreas Hory and M. Valfian Pop, met at Turnu Severin, the Rumanian Danubian port near the Iron Gates. Although official details of the Hungarian claims and the Rumanian counter-proposals were not published, it was stated in Bucharest that Hungary had presented demands involving the cession by Rumania of some two-thirds of Transylvania, while on the other hand Rumania

insisted that the principle of an exchange of populations should be the basis of any settlement, and that in addition she was prepared to cede immediately the frontier departments of Satu Mare, Salaj Bihor, and Arad. The negotiations were interrupted on Aug. 19th to enable the Hungarian delegates to consult their Government and were renewed on the following day. On Aug. 24th, however, negotiations were broken off by Hungary owing to the fact (as stated in Budapest) that no common grounds for discussion existed. The Rumanian official organ "Romania" characterised the demands put forward by Hungary as "enormous, unbelievable and absurd."

The breaking-off of the Turnu Severin negotiations was followed by virulent attacks on Rumania in the Hungarian Press and by a number of "incidents" on the joint frontier. It was alleged in Budapest on Aug. 27th that a Rumanian plane had attacked a Hungarian plane inside the Hungarian frontier and on the following day it was officially stated in Bucharest that a Hungarian plane had dropped six bombs on the Transylvanian town of Satu Mare and that propagandist leaflets had been dropped over Brasov.

On Aug. 27th the German and Italian Ministers in Budapest were recalled by their Governments to report on the Transylvanian situation, and on the following day Hitler presided over an Axis conference which had been convened at Berchtesgaden and which was attended by Count Ciano, Herr von Ribbentrop, Field-Marshal Keitel, Herr von Mackensen

(German Ambassador in Rome), Signor Alfieri (Italian Ambassador in Berlin) and the German and Italian Ministers in Budapest and Bucharest. Later the same day it was announced that the Premiers and Foreign Ministers of Hungary (Count Teleki and Count Csaky) and Rumania (MM. Gigurtu and Manoilescu) had been summoned to Vienna for a settlement of the Transylvanian dispute by Axis arbitration. After meetings on Aug. 30th it was officially announced from Vienna that the arbitral decision had been accepted by both countries. Rumanian acceptance of the "Vienna Award" was given by a Crown Council presided over by King Carol on the same date.

Under the "Vienna Award" over half of Transylvania including the whole of Northern Transylvania and the three "Szekler" provinces (i.e., those districts inhabited almost wholly by Magyars, who had been settled in the area for over 1,000 years) were ceded to Hungary, the ceded territory to be evacuated by Rumanian troops within 14 days. Rumanian nationals in the territory were given the opportunity of opting for Rumania within six months and other Transylvanians opting for Rumania were given a further year to leave the territory, being allowed to take their movable property and to realise their immovable property. Any differences arising in the execution of the "Vienna Award" would be settled by direct Hungarian-Rumanian negotiation or in default thereof by German-Italian arbitration. In the exchange of Notes accompanying the Award, Rumania received a guarantee

from Germany and Italy of the integrity of her new frontiers.

It was officially stated in Bucharest after the terms of the "Vienna Award" were made known that the Note presented to the Rumanian Government at Vienna by the Axis Powers possessed the character of an ultimatum which Rumania was asked to accept unconditionally. Broadcasting on Aug. 31st, the Foreign Minister, M. Manoilescu, said that at Vienna neither the Rumanian nor the Hungarian delegations were allowed to put forward their points of view; that the Rumanian request for the acceptance of the ethnic principle as the sole basis for territorial adjustment was not admitted; that as there would remain a big Hungarian minority in Rumania and an even bigger Rumanian minority in Hungary, it was in the interests of both countries to treat their minorities well; and that in this connection the Axis Powers had given an assurance that the Rumanian minority in Hungary would be well treated. He emphasized the importance to Rumania of the Axis guarantee of the new frontiers.

The news of the "Vienna Award" led to great demonstrations against Hungary and the Axis Powers at Cluj, the Transylvanian capital, where the local paper "Tribuna", in defiance of the censorship, demanded war and declared that the Transylvanian people would not accept the Axis dictates. Similar demonstrations in Bucharest were broken up by the police.

Under the "Vienna Award" Rumania lost some 2,370,000 inhabitants, of whom over

1,000,000 were Rumanians. According to the Rumanian census figures of 1930 the ceded population comprised 48 per cent Hungarians, 43 per cent Rumanians, 2·5 per cent Germans, and 6·5 per cent other (Jews, Bulgars, etc.). The new Hungarian frontier extended to the Carpathian watershed some 13 miles north of Brasov; among leading centres of population passing to Hungary were Cluj (Kolozsvar), centre of a famous Rumanian university, and Oradea Mare. Much of the ceded territory was forest land but there were fertile agricultural regions in which maize, wheat and rye were grown, and in addition important mineral deposits were present (coal and gold mines, lead, iron, silver and copper).

The "Award" led to an upheaval lasting for months throughout Rumania. There were large-scale anti-Axis and anti-Hungarian demonstrations and clashes between Hungarian and Rumanian troops. The Rumanian Cabinet resigned and three days later King Carol, against whom there had been many demonstrations, abdicated in favour of his son, Crown Prince Michael. Carol, accompanied by his mistress, Madame Lupescu, left the country. Michael's mother who had been separated from Carol for many years returned from exile. Some reforms were introduced but some time elapsed before the country settled down to face its new position—and eventual war with Russia.

Although things were not going as well for him in North Africa as he might have expected, Mussolini decided to grab some more territory at

easy cost—so he thought—and so after a violent press campaign started three months before, accusing Greece of fomenting disorders in Albania and making several ridiculous demands for Greek territory, Rome on the early morning of October 28th issued an ultimatum to Greece, accusing her of "tolerating the use of her territorial waters and ports by the British Navy for the prosecution of the war against Italy," "permitting the organisation of the British secret service in the Greek Islands," of "terrorism" and "persistent attempts to create disorders on the Greek-Albanian frontier." These "provocations" could not be "tolerated" and Italy demanded that Greece allow Italian troops to occupy certain strategic points.

General Metaxas, the Greek Premier, summarily rejected the ultimatum and told the Italian minister in Athens that he considered it an Italian declaration of war. General mobilization was ordered and Metaxas called to the nation to arise and fight.

Britain guaranteed Greece "all the help in our power."

Several hours after the Italian invasion of Greece (which was soon met with stiff resistance), Hitler and Mussolini were meeting in Florence, and no official statement as to the subject of their discussions was given.

Soon the free press of the world was ringing with news of early Greek successes; not only were the Italian attacks being stemmed but the Greeks were carrying the war into Albania. Athens was also getting good support from the

support from the R. A. F. who carried out raids on enemy bases in Albania.

Then came the news that all Italian troops had been driven out of Greek territory and after a series of fresh successes, it was announced that Marshal Badoglio, Supreme Commander of the Italian Armed Forces, had resigned, his place being taken by General Cavellero, former Commander-in-Chief in Italian East Africa. It was stated that Badoglio had resigned "at his own request"; it was understood that differences between the Fascist Party and the Army had been a contributory cause, particularly in view of the *débâcle* in Albania. Other prominent naval and army officers were to follow with their resignations.

It is unnecessary to go into details of the fighting between Greece and Italy. The stubborn resistance put up by the Greek Army was superb and won the admiration of the free world; not only did the Greeks hold their own but threatened at times to drive the Italians into the sea. But elsewhere in the Balkans Hitler was carefully feeling his way, preparing for the cowardly attack on the Greeks that was to bring the war dangerously near the Middle East—and also to prepare the way for the onslaught on Russia.

Rumania during the winter of 1940-41 was the principal scene of Nazi intrigue; the country following the "Vienna Award" was in a most unsettled state. There were outbreaks of sharp fighting here and there but, thanks to the help rendered by General Antonescu, the Rumanian

Premier, gradually Fascist influence spread till by mid-February it was authoritatively stated that thousands of German troops had entered the country and taken up key positions. Then it was Bulgaria's turn. During January and February constant reports were heard that German troops had infiltrated into Bulgaria, and despite the efforts made by Bulgarian statesmen to depict the situation as normal and their frequent iterations of the Government's determination to maintain a strictly neutral policy, developments in the week February 21-28 gave ever-increasing indications of the imminence of German occupation. Finally on March 1st Professor Filoff, the Bulgarian Premier, flew to Vienna and formally signed a protocol declaring his country's adherence to the Tripartite Pact. Bulgaria thus became a satellite of the Axis. German troops, stationed for many weeks in Southern Rumania, crossed the frontier, to take up positions against Greece.

Germany had also turned her attention to Yugoslavia and a serious crisis developed there on the receipt of a number of Nazi demands. The Germans wanted Yugoslavia to join the Tripartite Pact, on which she woud receive certain "guarantees" of her frontiers but at the same time Berlin wanted the free passage of troops, all anti-Axis activity to be stopped and the national economy of the country to be brought into harmony with that of Germany. Led by Prince Paul, the Senior Regent, there was a certain section that was pro-Fascist but at the same time Yugoslavia mobilized and there was a great volume of opinion in favour of the Allies. Soldiers, students and

peasants demanded that there be no link-up with the Axis. Finally on March 24th the Yugoslav Premier and Foreign Minister left for Vienna to sign the Pact; but this move met with the greatest consternation throughout the country. At midnight on March 26-27 the revolt came to a head when the Chief of the Yugoslav Air Force carried out a bloodless *coup d'etat*, Prince Paul fled, and 17-year-old King Peter took over full Royal powers. There was an immediate response throughout the whole country. But the Germans opened up a violent anti-Yugoslavian campaign, alleging the usual "atrocities". An attitude of restraint and dignity was maintained by the Government at Belgrade.

Without even a declaration of war, Germany attacked Yugoslavia and also Greece in the early morning of April 6th, Belgrade, which had been previously declared an open city, being savagely bombed at 7-15 a.m.

On the same day it was officially announced that a British Army, comprising British, Australian and New Zealand troops, had arrived in Greece and that R. A. F. squadrons in Greece had been strongly reinforced.

But what chance had the gallant Yugoslavs against Axis armies pouring in from almost all sides, Italy as usual employing her "stab-in-the-back" tactics from the direction of Albania?

The Huns more than justified their reputation for fierce brutality. Could there be anything more moving than this message addressed to all civilized nations issued by the Yugoslav Gov-

ernment on April 9th in connection with the bombing of Belgrade three days earlier?

"We inform all civilised peoples of the frightful crimes committed by the German armed forces in the war imposed on us.

"Belgrade, the capital of our country, which in good time was proclaimed an open and undefended city, was bombed by German aircraft without a declaration of war.

"On Sunday morning (April 6) while the sound of church bells was calling the faithful to church for Divine Service, a bombardment eclipsing in horror all imagination was launched by German aeroplanes. A veritable deluge of incendiary and explosive bombs turned the city into a mass of ruins and gutted homes, while all the streets of Belgrade were covered with the bodies of children, women, and old men.

"Never during the long history of this martyr city were such cruelties committed even by the most primitive invaders. This devastation of a defenceless and open city was executed by aircraft of that nation which claimed for itself the first place among cultured peoples.

"All the precepts of international right and human considerations were set aside by the German aeroplanes, which destroyed most of the hospitals, churches, schools, and cultural institutions of Belgrade in broad daylight.

"The Royal Palace at Dedinie (a suburb of Belgrade) was completely destroyed by 30 direct hits during the mass air raids on the city. The

German aeroplanes even bombed isolated houses, killing thus Dr. Kulovetz, leader of the Slovene people and a member of the Government.

"Horrible scenes occurred during the bombardment, when German aeroplanes machine-gunned women and children fleeing from their burning homes. Flying low, the German bombers turned houses into hecatombs."

The Yugoslav and Greek campaigns were soon over, but the former country was not completely quelled—by no means—there was yet to arise a great leader, Marshal Tito—but the story of his magnificent struggle against frightful odds, backed up by his Partisans, must be left for another volume.

Greece, hopelessly outflanked, was overrun and the Imperial forces had to be withdrawn, mainly to Crete on which the Germans started their fierce air-borne onslaught on May 20th. Attacking in great strength the Germans, often dressed in New Zealand uniforms, gained many footholds on the island. Disregarding heavy air losses, they kept up continuous attacks and after 12 days of fierce fighting the withdrawal of British and Empire Forces was announced.

And so we reach the end of this chapter which brings us up to the time when Hitler decided to commit his supreme blunder—the attack on Russia. There is only one other point to be mentioned—an episode which caused world-wide attention but which eventually became one of the unsolved mysteries of this war—the flight to Britain of Rudolf Hess, on May 10th. The Hess

affair has never been satisfactorily cleared up (and there seems to be no reason why this should not have been done officially) and all we can conclude from it is that, prior to the attack on Russia, Hess was the bearer of some peace proposals to Britain. They were refused; Russia was attacked; Churchill (despite his anti-Communist outlook) rose to the occasion, the Soviets and Britain were bound in a close alliance, which we hope will last for many years after the stench of Fascism has died away from this world.

CHAPTER V

ON TO PEARL HARBOUR

LET us now consider briefly the principal events in America, Japan and China from the fall of France till the sudden outbreak of war in the Pacific—Pearl Harbour. For convenience sake the three countries are grouped together because all through the winter of 1940-41 and the summer and autumn of '41 Japan was making careful preparations for her onslaught against the Allies; and America which was to be so unexpectedly and so deeply involved also began seriously to look to her defences, though she should have made more careful preparations in the Pacific, as during these fateful months Tokyo gave repeated indications that she eventually meant business in that theatre.

For instance as early as June 1940 Mr. Arita, the Japanese Foreign Minister, enunciated a Japanese "Monroe Doctrine" for East Asia and the South Seas:

> "The destiny of these regions," he explained, "is a matter of grave concern to Japan in view of her mission and responsibility as a stabilizing force in East Asia. Japan's ideal since the foundation of the Empire has been that all nations should be enabled to find their proper places in the world. Our foreign policy has been based on this ideal, for which we have not hesitated to stake even our national existence by fighting. It is most natural that

peoples most closely related geographically, racially, culturally, and economically should first form a sphere of their own and establish peace and order within it. The countries of East Asia and the region of the South Seas are very closely related to one another. Japan expects that the Western Powers will do nothing that will exert any undesirable influence on the stability of East Asia."

Immediately after the fall of France the Japanese made their first demand on Indo-China—to close the arms route to China. This was agreed to and Japanese naval units were sent to Indo-Chinese waters "to keep watch over the transportation of goods going through Indo-China." Jap troops also took up positions on the land frontier of Hong Kong, thereby blockading the colony from the land.

In America the isolationists were having their say; for instance Colonel Lindbergh stated that aid to Britain was "courting disaster" But despite the isolationists, America was getting on with her defence programme. With the passing of the Naval Appropriations Bill of 1,492,000,000 dollars, new battleships were put under construction and Admiral Stark's (Chief of Naval Operations) scheme for a "Two-Ocean Navy" made progress.

But China was to receive a sharp blow by Britain agreeing to close the Burma Road, a Chinese Foreign Office spokesman condemning the decision as "unfriendly and unlawful" and contrary to the principles of international law, to treaties between China and Britain, and resolu-

tions of the League of Nations.

Speaking in the House of Commons on July 18th Mr Churchill stated that—

"In considering the requests made by the Japanese Government and in reaching the agreement to which I have referred, H. M. Government were not unmindful of the various obligations accepted by this country including their obligations to the National Government of China and to the British territories affected. H. M. Government were, however, also bound to have regard to the present world situation, nor could they ignore the dominant fact that we are ourselves engaged in a life-and-death struggle.

"The general policy of this country towards the Far Eastern troubles has been repeatedly defined. We have persistently asserted our desire to see assured to China a free and independent future, and we have as frequently expressed our desire to improve our relations with Japan.

"To achieve these objectives two things were essential—time and a relief of tension. On the one hand it was clear that the tension was rapidly growing owing to the Japanese complaints about the passage of war material by the Burma route. On the other, to agree to the permanent closure of the route would be to default from our obligations as a neutral friendly Power to China. What we have therefore made is a temporary arrangement in the hope that the time so gained may lead to a solution just and equitable to both parties to the dispute, and freely accepted by them both.

"We wish for no quarrel with any nation of the Far East. We desire to see China's status

and integrity preserved, and as was indicated in our Note of January 14, 1939, we are ready to negotiate with the Chinese Government, after the conclusion of peace, the abolition of extra-territorial rights, the rendition of concessions, and the revision of treaties on the basis of reciprocity and equality.

"We wish to see Japan attain that state of prosperity which will ensure to her population the welfare and economic security which every Japanese naturally desires. Towards the attainment of the aims of both these countries we are prepared to offer our collaboration and our contribution. But it must be clear that, if they are to be attained, it must be by a process of peace and conciliation and not by war or threat of war."

The beginning of August saw renewed efforts by the Japs against China, one outstanding feature being the heavy bombing of Chungking after five months of inactivity caused by bad weather, while there were fresh outbreaks of terrorism by the Japanese in Shanghai (American citizens being involved).

In America more progress was being made with the defence programme, the 4,000,000,000-dollar "Two-Ocean" Navy Expansion Bill was finally passed, which was greatly to increase the strength of the U. S. Navy, and this measure was followed a few weeks later by the announcement that on September 3rd the U. S. had decided to transfer immediately 50 over-age destroyers to the Royal Navy and in return would obtain from Britain without charge and on a 99-years lease

naval and air bases in British territory in the Western Hemisphere. About the same time was also announced the setting up of a joint Canadian American Defence Board, for the protection of the Western Hemisphere.

Then came news that the Japanese were again on the move—they had demanded of the French authorities in Indo-China the use of several bases. This naturally caused great alarm in China, and Chungking threatened military action. After much bargaining with the Vichy authorities, the Japs got their way and they were soon firmly established in yet further strategic positions.

On September 27th a 10-year pact between Germany, Italy and Japan was signed in Berlin, assuring mutual co-operation in the establishment of a "new world order." In reply Mr. Sumner Welles, the U. S. Under-Secretary of State, pledged aid to Britain and urged preparation for all eventualities.

At last came the welcome news, on October 9th, that the Burma Road would be reopened. Speaking in the House of Commons, Mr. Churchill said :

"Three months ago we were asked by the Japanese Government to close the Burma Road to certain supplies which might reach the Republic of China in its valiant struggle. We acceded to this demand because we wished to give an opportunity to Japan and China to reach what is called in diplomatic language 'a just and equitable settlement' of their long and deadly quarrel. Unhappily this 'just and equitable

settlement' has not been reached. On the contrary, the protracted struggle by Japan to subjugate the Chinese race is still proceeding with all its attendant miseries. We much regret the opportunity has been lost, but in the circumstances H. M. Government propose to allow the agreement about closing the Burma Road to run its course to October 17th, but we do not see our way to renew it after that."

Fleets of motor-lorries and hundreds of pack animals had been assembled in readiness for the Road's reopening and the first consignment of war material left Lashio on October 18th.

After months of negotiation, a treaty was signed in Nanking on November 30th by Mr. Wang Ching-wei and General Abe, Japanese envoy to the Nanking Government, under which Japan recognised that Government as the "National Government of China." The treaty included the following points:

1. "Co-operation on a reciprocal basis" between Japan, Manchukuo, and the Nanking régime for common defence against Communistic activities and economic co-operation in the "new order" of East Asia.

2. Recognition of Manchukuo by the Nanking Government.

3. Japan to be given the right to station troops in the Northern Provinces and Inner Mongolia for "defence against Communism," and to station naval units in Chinese waters.

4. Japan to surrender extra-territorial rights, as well as her Concessions in China, but

China to "open her territory" to the domicile and business of Japanese subjects.

5. China to pay compensation for "damages to the rights and interests of Japanese subjects" caused by hostilities.

6. Special Japanese trade privileges in the Yangtse Valley and over Chinese resources—particularly minerals—in North China (thereby giving Japan in effect a decisive voice in China's foreign trade).

7. Withdrawal of Japanese troops from China (except the Northern Provinces and Inner Mongolia) two years after the restoration of "general peace."

Simultaneously with the announcement of the treaty, Mr. Wang Chung-hui, Foreign Minister of the Chinese National Government at Chungking, warned other countries that recognition of Mr. Wang Ching-wei, "arch-traitor of the Republic," would be regarded as an unfriendly act and would lead to the breaking off of diplomatic relations. Marshal Chiang Kai-shek, speaking on December 3rd, declared that the Nanking treaty was a "mere scrap of paper" without any effect, which, far from bringing about an early end to hostilities such as the Japanese believed, would only intensify China's resistance to Japanese aggression. The war, he said, would be fought to the bitter end; this was China's only answer to the treaty.

Inspired by the Japs' success, the Thais were not long in taking advantage of the new state of affairs in Indo-China and tension which was experienced throughout December, when the

Thais demanded back some territory originally taken from them by the French, led to serious clashes. Again the Japanese stepped in and at the end of January the dispute was settled when an armistice was signed by a commission comprising eight Japanese, five French and five Thai representatives.

A sharp warning that Tokyo meant war was given on January 21st when it was stated in the Diet that war with America could be avoided only if the United States refrained from interfering with Japanese policy, ceased her support to the Chungking Government and agreed to Japan's claim to dominate the mainland and to enjoy a preferential position in Indo-China and the Dutch East Indies. If she were determined to resist Japanese plans, Japan must oppose her, even if it meant entering the European War.

President Roosevelt after his re-election for a third term soon showed that it was his intention to help Britain to the full, while at the same time looking to America's defences, and the early months of 1941 saw big strides in America's armaments programme; the 7,000,000,00-dollar appropriation bill to provide "every gun and munition of war we possibly can" for Britain and the other democracies contained the following specification :

(*a*) ordnance $1,343,000,000, aircraft $2,054,000,000; tanks $362,000,000; vessels $629,000,000; miscellaneous equipment $260,000,000; facilities and land acquisition $752,000,000; agricultural aid $1,350,000,000; testing $200,000,000; necessary services and expenses $40,000,-

000 and administrative expenses $10,000,000; these amounts to be available until June 30, 1943.

President Roosevelt's eagerly-awaited declaration of policy concerning America's attitude to the war was made on May 27th in a "fireside chat" from the White House to the Governing Board of the Pan-American Union. He proclaimed the existence of a state of national emergency in the United States and openly warned America of the danger of Fascism spreading throughout the world and that the country must be prepared to defend herself. He also spoke of the link-up between the U. S. A. and South American republics and his determination to keep the Atlantic open for shipping.

Meanwhile, there were fresh developments on the Pacific. It was announced in Tokyo on July 16th that the Cabinet had resigned *en bloc* "to make room for a stronger Government to cope with the national and international situation." After the formation of the new ministry Prince Konoye, the Premier, stated that:

> "The policy of this country to cope with the international situation is already fixed; it now remains for us to put it into practice with speed and decision. It is my firm belief that the only way to realise this is to put our internal affairs in order on the basis of national policy. With the earnest support of a population of 100,000,000 I intend to do everything in my power to accomplish the great ideal of founding an empire by overcoming all difficulties that may lie in our country's path."

Tension in the Pacific increased in August when

it was officially announced that 40,000 Jap troops were landing in Southern Indo-China, taking over important bases, and that a Japanese radio and press campaign had started against Thailand, alleging British troop concentrations on the Thai frontier and Thai "submission to Anglo-Saxon pressure."

The next big international event was the meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt at sea in August—the meeting that resulted in the much discussed Atlantic Charter and Clause 3 of which ("They respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them")—gave rise to much distress and criticism in India, when it was discovered that it did not apply to that country.

The meeting showed once more that Roosevelt was determined to aid Britain, and now also Russia, to the fullest against Germany.

On September 11th—following several cases of U. S. vessels having been attacked by U-boats—President Roosevelt made America's position clear regarding Germany. His warning to Hitler was given in a broadcast in which he dealt with the attack by a German U-boat on the U. S. destroyer "Greer". The President stated—

"My fellow Americans, the Navy Department has reported to me that on the morning of September 4 the U. S. destroyer 'Greer,' proceeding in full daylight towards Iceland, had reached a point S. E. of Greenland. She was carrying American mail to Iceland and flying the American

flag. Her identity as an American ship was unmistakable. She was then and there attacked by a submarine. Germany admits it was a German submarine. The submarine deliberately fired a torpedo at the 'Greer', followed later by another torpedo attack.

"In spite of what Hitler's propaganda bureau has invented, and in spite of what any American obstructionist organisation may prefer to believe, I tell you the blunt fact that the German submarine fired first upon this American destroyer without warning and with the deliberate design to sink her. Our destroyer at the time was in the waters which the Government of the U. S. A. had declared to be waters of self-defence—surrounding the outposts of American protection in the Atlantic. In the North, outposts have been established by us in Iceland, Greenland, Labrador, and Newfoundland. Through these waters there pass many ships of many flags. They bear food and other supplies to civilians, and material of war for which the people of the U. S. A. are spending billions of dollars, and which, by Congressional action, they have declared to be essential for the defence of their own land.

"The U. S. destroyer, when attacked, was proceeding on a legitimate mission. If the destroyer was visible to the submarine when the torpedo was fired, then the attack was a deliberate attempt by the Nazis to sink a clearly identified American warship. On the other hand, if the submarine was beneath the surface and with the aid of its listening devices fired in the direction of the sound of the destroyer without even taking the

trouble to learn its identity—as the official German communiqué would indicate—then the attack was even more outrageous, for it indicates a policy of indiscriminate violence against any vessel sailing the seas—belligerent or non-belligerent. This was piracy—legally and morally. It was not the first nor the last act of piracy which the Nazi Government has committed against the American flag in this war. Attack has followed attack."

Roosevelt also warned Americans that they "could not go on living happily and peacefully in a Nazi-dominated world," and he referred to German activities in South America, where several states had been forced to take strong action against spies and fifth-columnists

Col. Knox, Secretary of the Navy, addressing the American Legion at Milwaukee on Sept. 15th, said that the U. S. Navy would begin to hunt for Axis raiders operating in the Atlantic as from September 16th, and that "the Navy has orders to capture or destroy by every means at its disposal any Axis raider encountered between the American continent and adjacent Icelandic waters".

On September 17 he announced that U. S. warships and planes were escorting cargoes across the Atlantic and emphasised that "since the last war many more methods have been developed for safeguarding shipping, and the U. S. A. is using them all". He also said that American warships were hunting an Axis raider that was at large in the Pacific and indicated that a modernised patrol system had been worked out with the Royal Navy.

Early in October Malaya came prominently into the news with the reports of fresh Imperial reinforcements (including Indian troops) and conferences between Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham (C-in-C, Far East) and Dutch Navy and army chiefs at Java and a meeting between him and General Douglas MacArthur (U. S. C.-in-C., Far East) at Manila. Great confidence was expressed regarding the strength of the defences against possible Jap aggression and here in India these assurances seemed to add still further to the great and disastrous policy of complacency regarding Tokyo's future intentions. Stories were published in newspapers of the great defensive system that had been built up in Malaya and elsewhere and the general feeling expressed was that the Japs would never "dare" to attack. Even when on October 16th Tokyo announced that the Konoye Cabinet had resigned *en bloc* and General Tojo (well-known as a forceful exponent of a "forward policy" for Japan) had become Premier, people still thought Japan would never "dare".

On taking up his new office Tojo declared that it was Japan's "heavenly mission" to establish the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere"; the country was "at the cross-roads" and "must rise or fall". At the same time it was announced that Mr. Saburo Kurusu, former Ambassador in Berlin was on his way to Washington to assist Admiral Nomura in his talks with the U. S. Government (talks which were to lull many into a sense of false security, when all the time the Japs were

putting the finishing touches to their Pearl Harbour venture).

Australia and New Zealand were looking to their defences and many new measures were passed during the summer of '41. On October 20th it was announced that the democracies in the Pacific were co-operating to meet a possible extension of the war and Mr. Duff Cooper who had been visiting Malaya and India on behalf of the British Government had conversations in Sydney, in the beginning of November, with Australian statesmen and defence chiefs. Brooke-Popham also visited Australia.

While talks between Mr. Cordell Hull and Mr. Kurusu continued in Washington, Tojo told the Japanese Diet of his country's "heroic efforts" in China and at the same time that Japan was doing her "utmost" towards a peaceful settlement in the Pacific: while the Foreign Minister, Mr. Togo, stated that his country repudiated "malicious propaganda representing Japan as harbouring aggressive designs in the South Seas." But despite such assurances the Japanese were steadily increasing their armed forces on the Thai border and this was backed up by the pressure of heavy naval forces off the Thai coast.

And so the stage was set for Pearl Harbour—one of the most treacherous attacks in the history of warfare.

END OF SECOND VOLUME

APPENDIX I

THE PERSECUTION OF JEWS

"IN desperation the Jew attempts to stem the inevitable course of events; it will be of no avail, we shall drive him on. In the end the Fuehrer's prophecy wlll have come true . . ." Thus spoke Dr. Goebbels, Hitler's propagandist-in-chief, in May, 1943. But he forgot that there had been other prophets besides his Fuehrer, and one of them many, many years ago wrote:

> "Because thou hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity . . . therefore blood shall pursue thee . . . ."

That prohecy has now come true; Germany is being pursued for the crimes she has committed during these past 12 years; crimes not only against other nations but against civilization—not the least of them against the children of Israel.

I shall attempt to give a comprehensive picture of the German people's villainy in their persecution of the Jews before and during this war. I specially mention the German people, because though it was the Nazi bosses who thought out the various forms of torture to be inflicted on the Jews, the people of Germany allowed Hitler to come to power and stood by as he unfolded and put into operation the appalling measures against those of the Jewish race who were unfortunate enough to come under his sway.

One can only fully appreciate the extent of Hitler's hatred for the Jews by going through the

pages of "Mein Kampf". Written long before he came to power and revised many times, its various editions retain his first outbursts against the Jews—in that respect this Nazi bible remains unchanged. He used the undoubted hatred that was aroused in Germany at the end of the last war, when many Jews who had profited by the struggle flaunted their riches in the faces of a starving and ruined people, to blame them for the disaster that overcame their country in 1918. But that was only to give him a start. He went on to curse them for a hundred and one crimes that they did not commit. He vented his fury on them on all imaginable economic and political grounds. He declared that they took away jobs from Germans (to be known afterwards universally as Aryans); he maintained that they controlled the Press, the theatre, the arts; there were too many Jewish lawyears, doctors, professors; they were a "pestilence, worse than the Black Death."

The anti-Semitic campaign was one of the main planks of the Nazi platform; it was to be used in order to finance the party, to give the Germans their ideas of racial superiority—the persecution of the Jews was to be used as a means of cleansing the German race of all foreign elements—it was in short a gigantic stunt in order to help the Nazis to power. Many of Hitler's lieutenants jumped at it as a means of satisfying their brutal instincts and a means also of satisfying the lust to kill which filled the hearts of the thugs and hooligans that they had gathered round about them. Few must have sincerely believed in Hitler's anti-Semitic teachings, but to refer again to

"Mein Kampf", its pages show beyond doubt that he sincerely believed in what he had written.

Just let us consider for a minute what he had to say. He first deals with his extreme youth, declaring : "I cannot recall having heard the word 'Jew' spoken in my parent's house during my father's life-time. I think the old gentleman considered that the expression of any opinion on the Jewish race was not to be tolerated." Then he goes on to say—"I always thought that they were Germans; I cannot account for this absurd idea of mine." Then comes his admission of the first hints of the madness that was later to overcome him in his attitude to Judaism. It was in Vienna where as a young man he wandered the streets of the city crazed with disappointment at his failure to become a painter and also crazed with the first tumultuous thoughts of future glory that surged through his brain and were ultimately to give birth to the vilest system the world has ever known.

What did he have to say?—"Then I went to Vienna. There, faced with the difficulties of my daily existence, I did not at first give any attention to the different populations of the city. At that time Vienna had nearly 200,000 Jews among its 2,000,000 inhabitants. I did not see them for a long time. But one day strolling in the centre of the city, I was suddenly confronted by a person in black buckles, wearing a long garberdine cloak."

Then came the moment that was afterwards to spell disaster and ruin to millions at the hands of Hitler.

"Can this creature be a Jew?", he asked himself.

Then, bursting on him, came a second question—"Can he possibly be a German?"

And so the fanatical hatred of Jews was born in the youthful and abnormal brain of Hitler—hatred which was to grow and grow with the passing of years, till his chance came in 1933 to vent all his diabolic fury on Judaism.

That the German people had been fully forewarned, long before 1933, of what they might expect from Nazism is shown by the Party's programme which was evolved 14 years before and blazoned to the world at large at a mass meeting in Munich on February 25, 1920.

Then it was stated that the Nazi programme had been carefully thought out and was unalterable. In section 2 of the Constitution it was stated :

"None but members of the nation may be citizens of the State. None but those of German blood, whatever their creed, may be members of the nation. No Jew therefore may be a member of the nation. Anyone who is not a citizen of the State may live in Germany only as a guest and must be regarded as being subject to foreign laws."

At a further great rally in 1927 Hitler declared emphatically—"No man who feels that he cannot go the whole way with us in the Jewish question need apply to us," and then he continued—"The German Reich shall be a home for the Germans—not for Jews."

Hitler's lieutenants also had plenty to say on the Jewish question before they came to power.

For instance in 1929, Goebbels, who was not a first-rate example of Teutonic manhood and was given a special place in Aryan ethnology, being described as "a dwarf-like German who grew dark," actually admitted in one of his books—"certainly the Jews are also human beings," but went on to blackguard them in the vilest terms; while Rosenberg, Hitler's foreign affairs expert who distinguished himself when on a goodwill mission to London by laying a Swastika flag on the Cenotaph, wrote in 1932—"It's only when the Jews die that German suffering ends."

And so in 1933 the German nation accepted the Nazi Party with all its promises of violence and brutality towards the Jews.

They were soon eliminated from all government offices and from many of the professions. Simultaneously the "Aryanization" of business squeezed the Jewish population out of the economic life of Germany. In September 1934 a special proclamation to members of the Nazi Party ordered members to avoid all contacts with Jews. Party members were forbidden to represent a Jew in court, plead for Jews with any governmental or other authority; give references or certificates to Jews; have any social intercourse with Jews in public places and those members of the Party still employed by Jewish firms were forbidden to wear their badges while at work.

A year later by the iniquitous Nuremberg racial laws relations between Jews and citizens of German or kindred blood were forbidden; Jews were deprived of German citizenship and of political rights, and were forbidden to employ any

German' female under 45 years of age in their households. As a result of such conditions, it was officially estimated that over 200,000 confessional Jews out of a population of about 500,000 left Germany between April 1933 and August 1939. Those that remained were to a great extent divided between the ghetto and prison—in fact one newspaper correspondent once remarked—"the only employment open to the Jews is stone-breaking in the concentration camp."

Hitler's great moment came on March 27th, 1938, when he was able to return to his native country following Germany's seizure of Austria and spread untold misery and bloodshed throughout the land.

Hitler returned to Vienna after 25 years, now as a conqueror instead of slinking through the streets muttering threats against the Jews, and he roared from the balcony of the former Imperial Palace—"In a few days a revolution has occurred in the German nation, the significance of which will only be appraised by later generations," but he left it to Goering to issue the first threat against the Jews. This the latter did a few days later when he declared—"I have to address a serious warning to the city of Vienna which can no more be called a German city because there are 300,000 Jews. Vienna must again become a German city. We do not want the Jews, neither in the cultural nor in the economic sphere."

Diabolic measures followed in quick succession and in Vienna there was an immediate orgy of Jew-baiting. The Jews were rapidly forced out of every economic activity and what was once

a community outstanding in intellect was soon turned into a community of paupers.

The educational authorities decided that Jews must form only 2 per cent of the student body in Austrian universities. This figure was based on the calculation that Austria contained 350,000 Jews in the sense of the German racial laws. Since the total population of Austria was a little over 6,500,000, they formed rather more than 5 per cent of the population, and it was explained that the new quota was necessary because the Jews formerly entered the universities in "unduly large numbers."

Within a short time the Nuremberg racial laws were also applied and the intensity and bitterness of the Austrian anti-Semitic campaign was far greater than that which occurred in Germany immediately after 1933. In Germany the general policy towards Jews could be summed up as emigration and annihilation, but a measure of decency was observed in enabling the Jews to prepare for emigration, to take some remnants of their property with them, while many that remained were able to eke out some sort of a livelihood in the restricted callings which they were allowed to follow. But in Vienna there was an outburst of Jew-baiting such as Europe had not seen since the Dark Ages.

Immediately after the seizure of the country there was a period of physical violence, of public humiliation, of robberies in broad daylight. Tens of thousands of Jews were thrown out of employment and all important Jewish businesses were either confiscated or placed under an Aryan

Commissar in such conditions that the owners were glad to dispose of their enterprises at any price. There were constant arrests. No specific charge was made but men and women were taken from their homes or in the streets and carried off, some to Austrian prisons, others to German concentration camps. These raids were not restricted to the rich: they included doctors and lawyers, merchants and their employees, poor artisans and peasants. In the country districts also the campaign went on with brutal violence; there were huge round-ups of Jewish peasants who had tilled the land in some districts for generations.

The peak of pre-war violence against the Jews both in Germany and Austria followed the assassination in November, 1938, of von Rath, a German diplomatic official employed in the German Embassy in Paris. He was shot by a Polish-Jewish youth of 17 who declared that he wished to avenge his co-religionists in Germany and in particular the sufferings of the Polish Jews in the Reich whose wholesale deportation back to their homeland had been undertaken shortly before, among those expelled being the youth's aged parents.

The assassination was the signal for scenes of systematic plunder and destruction which had seldom had their equal in any civilized country. Throughout Germany and Austria synagogues were set on fire or dynamited, Jewish shops and homes were smashed and ransacked; Jews were collected together and hounded through the streets by bands of young Nazis. These hooligans toured the streets of cities and towns smashing all Jewish

shops, destroying goods and furniture and molesting individual Jews. Seldom if ever did the police interfere, confining their activities to taking into "protective custody" the owners of the shops. Even fire brigades remained similarity inactive, for instance merely protecting neighbouring buildings from the burning synagogues. Prayer books and sacred articles were piled in the streets and burnt or polluted.

In Vienna the anti-Semitic excesses were particularly violent. Thousands were arrested, and more than a score of synagogues and prayer-houses were destroyed by fire and several were blown to pieces by bombs.

In Frankfurt, Munich and other towns aged and infirm people were compelled to leave the Jewish old peoples' homes and were driven into the streets, leaving their few possessions behind.

The German Government then stepped in and took the opportunity to impose fresh hardships on the Jewish people.

These new measures were yet another reflection on the German race. They were as follows:

1. As from January 1st, 1939, Jews were forbidden to own retail shops, mail-order firms, export businesses or to engage in independent handicrafts. Nor might any Jew be a manager of any concern, and Jews occupying leading positions without being managers were to be dismissed at six weeks' notice.

2. Damage done to Jewish shops, dwellings and property must be made good by the Jews themselves.

3. Claims for compensation from insurance companies by Jews of German nationality would be confiscated by the Reich.

4. Finally, all Jews of German nationality must pay to the Reich a collective fine of £83,000,000.

Goebbels also stepped in and issued a further decree excluding Jews from concerts, lectures, theatres, cinemas and all other public performances of a cultural nature. All Jewish cultural organisations, including schools, were closed down; Jewish children were forbidden to attend German schools and all Jewish students were banned from universities.

Many families faced terrible distress and starvation; many tried to flee to other countries, were sent back and hid in fields and woods afraid of returning to their homes.

. . . And all this for the assassination of one man in whom was personified to this half-crazed youth the Nazi machine.

Any review of the persecution of the Jews by Germany would be incomplete without mention of one of Hitler's most faithful lieutenants and, at the same time, one of the most evil scoundrels of modern times. He is Julius Streicher, barrel-chested, shaven-headed, in appearance the incarnation of brutality, and known to the world as the Nuremberg Jew-baiter. It is said that he started off his career as a schoolmaster and what is known definitely is that before 1933 he was constantly under police supervision—in fact on his fiftieth birthday, he received as a special present from the Party his police record, which it was

stated "formerly might have been used against him as incriminating material." With the Fascists in power, and the greater his crimes, he was of course all the more popular. The baiting and torture of Jews was his speciality. In July 1933 he ordered 250 Jews who had been arrested to pluck grass out of a field with their teeth. He had a newspaper which was filled with the most viciously revolting anti-Semitic propaganda that one could possibly imagine.

Although said to be an ex-schoolmaster, his general knowledge was not of the best. For instance, he once roared at a mass meeting in Berlin. . . "The great Jew who lived in England, Benjamin Disraeli, became Premier. Later he was elevated to the peerage under the name of Lord Gladstone."

And this was a leader of modern Germany, a friend of Hitler, who once flew all the way from Berlin to Nuremberg to pay him a surprise birthday visit.

So far I have referred to the German prewar atrocities but with the overrunning of Poland in September, 1939, the campaign against the Jews took fresh shape; before it had been persecution, torture and also killing but now it became sheer mass slaughter. The Germans' policy of extermination was planned and executed in three stages—the first involved the setting up of ghettos, labour and concentration camps in Eastern Europe; the second, deportation of Jews to these establishments; and thirdly, mass liquidation. The American Institute for Jewish Questions estimated in September, 1943, that only

5,000,000 out of Europe's 8,300,000 Jews remained alive. After that the process of extermination was accelerated, so that by January, 1944, according to arrivals from Poland, 6,000,000 European Jews had by then been slaughtered in that country.

Many of these mass murders took place in Warsaw. In April 1940 the Jewish quarter of the city was declared a closed, contaminated area. Three months later it was reported in the German press that it had been found necessary to construct a wall round the Jewish quarter, because it was a "breeding place of disease." On October 16th the German Governor of Warsaw formally established the ghetto and ordered all Jews in the city into it. The living conditions were indescribable. Four hundred and fifty thousand people were trying to exist where 240,000 had lived before. Food rations were wholly inadequate. They amounted to 5¾ lbs. of bread and 6½ ozs. of sugar per month per person; no heating was permitted during the severe winter of 1941-42 and the death-rate rose rapidly as a result of starvation, exposure and disease.

Worse was to follow, till the Jews of Warsaw accepting death as inevitable rose against their oppressors. But before telling the story of this heroic rising, I shall first refer briefly to the process of extermination practised by the Germans at the Warsaw ghetto before the rising.

The first action was taken on July 20th, 1942, when special guards, drawn from the scum of Eastern Europe, were detailed off to patrol the approaches to the ghetto; after this escape be-

came impossible. Next, flying squads of German police drove through the streets of Warsaw shooting or taking as hostages any Jews they came across. Finally, it was announced that the ghetto would be evacuated at the rate of several thousand at a time. Their destinations were not disclosed. The German police cordoned off certain neighbouring streets, searching houses; if they found any old, infirm or crippled persons, they killed them on the spot.

Meanwhile, the deportees were herded into trucks, 120 in wagons designed for 40; and in some cases the floors of the trucks were covered with quick-lime and chlorine and the wretched people were forced to take off their shoes so that their feet should be burned when any moisture began to act on the lime. The trucks were then sealed and those that survived these journeys of death were tortured and massacred at their destinations in a manner that makes the mind reel at the mere conception of it.

Those that remained in the Warsaw ghetto at last decided that they should meet death instead of waiting for it. As early as August, 1942, there were many who pressed for open resistance, but they were desperately in need of arms. Appeals were made to the outside world for help, those appeals being mainly directed to the Polish Government-in-exile. But it was not until April 19th, 1943, that they felt themselves strong enough to rise in revolt.

At 4 o'clock in the morning a detachment of Gestapo and Storm Troopers arrived at the ghetto to remove more of the inhabitants for

execution—but to their amazement, they were met by volleys of rifle and machine-gun fire. The Germans stood back aghast, many fell. Help was summoned and fresh reinforcements arrived to find that every house, every street was in the hands of armed men—the ghetto was ablaze—the streets were barricaded and above flew the flags of the United Nations.

For days and nights this "miniature Stalingrad", as it was afterwards called, held out, despite repeated attacks with all the modern implements of war, including artillery, tanks and flame-throwers and even aircraft. Houses caught fire but still the gallant defenders fought on amidst the smouldering ruins until May 25th—five weeks after the outbreak—when the Germans announced that the ghetto had been "liquidated." It was estimated that about 25,000 men and women deliberately laid down their lives in this heroic struggle.

When Hitler visited Poland in March, 1942, he asked for particulars regarding the massacre of the Jews. The figures given him would have satisfied most homicidal maniacs but they were not good enough for him, so he issued an order that by the end of the year 50 per cent of the Jews in Poland were to be exterminated. Later this figure was raised; in August 1943 it was estimated that only 340,000 Jews were still alive in Poland out of a pre-war population of over 300,0000. In November a report estimated the number remaining at 130,000. And in addition, hundreds of thousands of Jews of other nationalities had been brought to the Polish death camps

for no other reason than to be exterminated.

After the start of the war the Germans established at least 55 ghettos, in addition to labour camps, mainly in Poland or later on in parts of the Ukraine. As at Warsaw mass liquidation was practised in all of them, thousands of persons being either killed on the spot or taken to torture camps for mass slaughter. At Cracow, for instance, it was decided in March 1943 that the ghetto should be cleared and in three days, 1,000 persons were murdered and the rest were taken to a torture camp, to be exterminated by gas or electricity. At one such camp the victims were suffocated by a special steam process and a large bulldozer was installed outside to dig the craters which were required for the daily mass burials. Young Jews were employed for the removal of the bodies, and their average life after allocation to this task was said to be two weeks.

The Nazis had often threatened that should they ever find themselves with their backs to the wall, they would cause as much destruction as possible before final defeat. We had an example of this after the opening of the Second Front in their devilish and indiscriminate use of flying bombs against defenceless civilians. The German mind already distorted with years of bullying and killing thus became even more distorted in defeat; like maddened animals the Germans were prepared to lash out in whatever direction they thought might cause most destruction before they were finally brought to their knees. Hence we had the horror of bombs landing without warning on homes, schools and hospitals and a hundred

and one non-military objectives. Instead of trying to obtain what forgiveness they might possibly hope for from their opponents, they struck still deeper into the horror and disgust with which they were held by all right-thinking peoples. And so it was also on the Russian front. When the Red Army men were pushing the Fascists back, the Germans vented their passions on any defenceless people who were unfortunate enough to be under their sway. Therefore as they retreated across the Ukraine, the inhabitants of those Russian towns—and especially the Jewish inhabitants—who were still within their grasp had to face terrible reprisals. It was the same with the Jews of Eastern Poland. For instance, early last year we read of the massacres perpetrated on the inhabitants of Lwow by the retreating Germans, as the Red Army moved nearer and nearer.

It was officially reported—"All day lorries pass through the city in a westerly direction. They travel by groups; three lorries carry people, the next is loaded with petrol, and the last carries tar—all head for the place of execution. On arrival there the victims are told to strip, then they are ordered to stand together and fire is opened on them with machine-guns. The corpses are then sprinkled with petrol and tar is poured over them, after which they are burnt. This work goes on from morning till night and day after day. Formerly the lorries were covered, but now the Germans do not bother to disguise their crime."

When Hitler published "Mein Kampf," those who cared to read those weird outpourings of a disordered brain, came across frequent references to the mass extermination of the Jews which he promised Europe some day, but few really took him seriously; even when he came to power and did start his brutal campaign against the Jews, it was little dreamt that their persecution would ever reach such colossal proportions as was the case when he overran Poland and then spread out over the rest of Europe. But hé kept his promises to the full and Poland soon became the dumping ground of Jews from other parts of Europe and the scene of the Nazis' dream of mass slaughter of the Jewish race. From almost every country in Europe they were taken there in thousands to die far from their homes and from any help that their non-Jewish friends and neighbours could have given them.

The total number of those deported cannot be estimated wholly accurately but the following approximate figures are known:

Austria—193,000 out of 200,000 Viennese Jews, at first chiefly to Poland.

Belgium—44,000 out of a pre-war population of 60,000 to Poland.

Bulgaria—10,000 were deported, some to Poland; 50,000 from Macedonia and Thrace, partly to Poland.

Czechoslovakia—150,000 to Poland.

Denmark—600 to Poland: 700 elderly Jews to a torture camp in Bohemia.

France—50,000 out of 343,000 (including 103,000 refugees) deported or fled. Those

deported went to the East.

Germany—245,000 of those left at the outbreak of the war, to Poland.

Holland—Over 100,000 out of 180,000 to the East.

Norway—1,000 out of 2,000 (including 500 refugees) to Poland.

Rumania—200,000 to Bohemia; in this case the survivors were afterwards allowed to return to their country.

Yugoslavia—86,000 (the whole Jewish population) deported to Poland, Italy or unknown destinations.

Italy—In March 1944, a Polish source reported the arrival of 3,000 Jews from Italy (mostly Italian, but some of Polish origin); all were murdered.

I have dealt with the persecution of the Jews before the war and the Germans' policy of mass extermination after overrunning Poland. Now let me deal with the plight of those Jews in Europe who remained alive despite the merciless behaviour of the German people.

Estimates of Jews remaining alive vary. As I have already stated, the American Institute of Jewish Questions—a reliable source—put the figure at 5,000,000 in September, 1943, but the intensification of massacres since that date must have greatly reduced that total.

The German policy in regard to those who were not deported to the East for extermination was, from the outbreak of war, one of degradation, pauperization and starvation. After each new country fell under German sway decrees

closely following those in the Reich were issued against the Jews, and the anti-Semitic measures were enforced with varying degrees of intensity. Some of the governments which retained a certain measure of control and even some of the puppet governments did their best to lighten the burden on the Jewish inhabitants though in most cases with little success. For instance, in Greece, the puppet government for long steadfastly refused to pass anti-Semitic legislation, while both in Belgium and France the puppet governments showed a certain amount of reluctance to apply anti-Semitic measures in the degree required by the Germans. The attitude of the mass of the French people and of the leading churchmen towards racial persecution had considerable influence with Vichy.

Most enthusiastic in the persecution of the Jews was the Rumanian Government before the invasion of the country by Russia, while before Italy's collapse, Mussolini tried hard to follow his master's lead. Italian Jews being declared "foreign nationals" and it was decreed that they should be considered as "enemy nationals" for the duration of the war.

But the general policy over practically the whole of German dominated Europe was that the Jews who survived should be reduced to the status of outlaws, deprived of all rights, of possessions and of redress.

Let us now consider some details of the actual persecutions carried on in various parts of Europe.

Brutality and violence was generally the

work of the Germans or of their Quisling associates. The majority of the people in the occupied countries showed little anti-Semitic feeling; in many instances, they openly expressed horror at the German atrocities and many are the risks that have been run to try and help the Jews. For instance, in France, the round-up of Paris Jews in July, 1943, which led to hundreds of suicides, appalled the population. In Belgium, when Jewish parents were deported, their children were simply abandoned. Neighbours and charitable institutions would come forward to help these helpless waifs; but in numerous cases nobody was allowed to help and many Jewish children were taken to the gas chamber near Antwerp. In Norway, Quisling's followers were particularly brutal; the mass of the Norwegians looked on with horror on their activities. In Italy the concentration camps to which Jews were taken were in many cases indescribable and the situation of the Jews in Trieste, Milan and Turin during the height of the anti-Semitic campaign was desperate. In Milan there were strong protests and an order was obtained for the release of prisoners under 13 and over 70. But this order was not carried out.

Those Jews that survived massacre and ill-treatment were regarded as a reservoir of slave labour and in France foreign Jews capable of work were deported for the hardest forms of manual labour; French Jews were called up for work within the country—many to build defences.

In Holland, the labour call-up was particularly barbarous. In 1942 all Jewish men were

ordered to labour camps and many were sent to Germany—few returned who had not been injured for life by ill-treatment. Wives and children of Amsterdam Jews, who were called up, were sent to a camp designed to house 6,000 persons but containing 15,000.

In Belgium, they were deprived of workers' rights and were obliged to accept any job, usually the heaviest and most degrading. They were segregated from other labourers.

In Czechoslovakia most physically fit Jewish men and women were sent to camps, to build roads, etc., or to German factories. In Greece many were called up for compulsory labour, such as street cleaning, road making, stone breaking, while in Bulgaria a law was passed in May 1943, ordering the transport of all able-bodied Jews to labour camps.

Needless to say, Jews in the various occupied countries were subject to special rationing restrictions. In Czechoslovakia, for instance, the regulations were particularly iniquitous—Jews not being allowed meat, butter, fresh milk or sugar—and no new clothes. In Rumania, Jews were given special barred ration cards, to ensure that they would receive lower rations than the rest of the population.

The essential principle of Fascism is to grab as much as possible from other people without paying for it and this policy was widely practised in Fascist dominated Europe, so far as the Jews were concerned. In France it was the official policy of Vichy to "eliminate the Jewish economic life of the country" and Jewish property

was handed over to Vichy nominees who found "Aryan administration" very lucrative. In Holland all Jewish property had been confiscated by 1943, and in Belgium also, the property of Jews was confiscated, much of it being sold at nominal prices to Rexists and other Quislings. In Norway by the end of 1942 Quislings had ordered the confiscation of the property of all Jews. In Czechoslovakia similar measures were carried out, the Jews being robbed of everything except the clothes they stood up in. Fascist Italy carried out looting in a big scale; in Bulgaria all Jewish assets were confiscated and sold while in Rumania a law forbade Jews to own or administer rural property; they were also forced to sell their shares in oil companies and other concerns of national importance, most Jewish factories and businesses being taken over by the State.

The campaign to force Jews out of commerce, industry and most of the professions was waged all over German-occupied Europe. In France expulsion was almost complete while in Holland by the end of 1940 Dutch officials and professional men had to sign a so-called declaration of "Aryanism", and, as a result, all Jewish lawyers, doctors, dentists, etc., were only allowed to attend Jews. In Belgium, by a decree published in October, 1940, Jews were prohibited from any part in politics, or public services, and they were barred from being journalists, teachers or professors.

In order to fit the next generation for their roles as slaves, young Jews were deprived of higher education over most of Europe.

For instance in Holland, from February, 1941, Jews were barred from universities, the number of students allowed to matriculate was limited; and from August, 1941, Jewish children were expelled from State schools and might only receive primary education from Jewish teachers. In Belgium an ordinance of December 1941 ordered the opening of separate educational establishments for Jews, and since no provision was made for new schools, other than primary and vocational, Belgian Jews were thereby debarred from higher education.

In Czechoslovakia from 1939 onwards little or no educational life existed for Jews; in Slovakia Jewish children were not allowed to attend school, but in France the Vichy attempt to exclude Jews from higher education was foiled to a large extent by the resistance of the teaching profession. In Bulgaria Jews were banned from university education from March, 1943; a few months later it was announced that Jewish children would be obliged to attend private Jewish primary schools while in Rumania Jews were banned from State schools and universities, many Jewish schools were requisitioned, and the rest were limited to a very low standard of education.

In their anxiety to degrade their victims as much as possible, the Fascists adopted all sorts of iniquitous measures, but they were degrading themselves, in enforcing them, in the eyes of civilization. In Holland, the part of France occupied in 1940, in Belgium and Norway, Jews were obliged to wear the Star of David. In Holland they were banned from cinemas, cafés, etc.; they

were not allowed to use cars, cycles, trains, or trams, or to own radios. They were only permitted to shop between 3 and 5 p.m., and were prohibited from attending markets and from entering houses of Aryans. Dutch museums received instructions not to acquire works by Jewish artists. In Belgium, conditions varied, and all the different restrictions were often ludicrous in the extreme. In the province of Antwerp, they were forbidden to travel in the front of trains; in the province of Limburg, they were not permitted to visit cinemas or ride bicycles. No Belgian Jew could wear any decoration or insignia of distinction. In Greece Jews over 14 were obliged to report themselves daily. They were not allowed to cross main roads or squares at certain hours or to leave or change their place of residence. By a decree passed in August, 1942, all Bulgarian Jews were compelled to wear the Star of David and a few months later Jews with Bulgarian names were obliged to change them; while none could own radio sets, telephones or cars.

To bring back to the ordinary ways of civilization those who have thus persecuted the Jews will be a colossal task that will have to be faced in Germany, perhaps for many years to come. The Nazi machine has so completely dehumanized particularly the younger generation that their reclamation to normal ways of man will be one of the principal constructive duties of the post-war world, by placing newer and better incentives before them.

APPENDIX II

THE SINKING OF THE BISMARCK

I reproduce this story of the sinking of the "Bismarck" (written by Edwin Muller in Harper's Magazine) as I consider it one of the most remarkable descriptive accounts of any outstanding incident of the war, and, incidentally, an excellent summing-up of Fascist psychology :

To Naval experts the sinking of the pride of the German navy was an important professional case study. For 20 years they had been building ships and training men to fight them; this was the first real test of a modern battleship against the newest types of fighting ships and planes. Problems of morale were involved as well : what kept men steady and courageous, what unnerved them in the supreme ordeal?

The navies of every nation have used their utmost resources to gather every scrap of information obtainable, and it is now possible to tell the dramatic story of what happened aboard the great ship during her last fateful days. Every fact, every incident here related is wholly authentic.

On the night of May 22, 1941, the *Bismarck*, accompanied by the cruiser *Prinz Eugen*, left the Norwegian coast and headed for the broad passage between Greenland and Iceland. At dawn on the 24th the enemy was sighted—Britain's largest ship of war, the famous old battle-cruiser *Hood*. Then another warship appeared, the *Prince of Wales*.

The *Hood* opened fire and the *Bismarck* answered with all her turrets. Then the German directed her fire at the *Prince of Wales.* The latter, injured, was unable to keep with the running fight. It was a duel between *Bismarck* and *Hood.*

At the *Bismarck's* third salvo a cloud of black smoke billowed up from the foredeck of the *Hood.* She listed to port, then buckled and broke in two. The stern half sank at once, the other floated for several minutes, then slowly slid beneath the surface.

To every nook and corner of the *Bismarck* the news ran swiftly. There were outbursts of wild cheering. The top deck, empty during the action, was now full of officers and men singing and embracing each other.

The *Bismarck* had paid a cheap price for the destruction of Britain's biggest ship. She had been hit, but her injuries were trivial. A mere handful of men were wounded.

All that day and the next the jubilation went on. Admiral Luetjens mustered the crew on deck and made one of his fiery, triumphant speeches. The thunder of applause and the deep *Sieg Heil* went rolling out across the waves. It was the Admiral's 52nd birthday, which added a touch to the celebration.

An exulting radio message came from Hitler. The Fuehrer awarded the Knight's Insignia of the Iron Cross to the First Gunnery Officer, Commander Schneider. Other decorations came over the ether.

The busiest men on board were the motion-

picture operators from Dr. Goebbels' office. They had filmed the action with the *Hood*, now they were recording the ceremonies. Soon Berlin would see on the screen how Britain's rule of the ocean had been ended.

Most of the crew were young—in their early twenties. Aboard were also some 500 naval cadets in their teens. This glorious victory was exactly what they had confidently expected. At their age they could hardly remember a world before Hitler. As Hitler Youth, unquestioning belief in the Master Race had been driven into their souls every waking hour: "To-day we rule Germany, to-morrow the whole world." One thing they knew: Germans are invincible.

And this ship too was invincible. It was, indeed, by far the strongest warship ever built. No one outside the German High Command knew her actual tonnage. It is certain that it was far greater than the 35,000 to which she was limited by treaty. Some rate her at 50,000. In her trials she is said to have made 33 knots, faster than any British or U. S. battleship.

On deck she looked much like any other battleship. But below she was unique. Beneath the water line she had five steel skins, each enclosing watertight spaces. The crew had been told that the *Bismarck* was not only able to defeat any British ship, but that she could defeat any combination that could be brought against her. She was literally unsinkable. They believed that.

There were some on board, older men, who didn't believe it; for instance the commanding

officer, Captain Lindemann. He knew that German ships could be sunk like any others. He was a quiet and capable officer, an old-style German Navy man rather than a fervent party man.

But his superior officer was a Nazi of the Nazis. Vice-Admiral Gunther Luetjens was slight of build—but he made up for it by a truculence of look and violence of spirit. He was an emotional leader who roused his men to high fervour. That he had corresponding fits of depression the crew did not know.

Morale had been high despite cramped living quarters. Besides the cadets and regular crew there were several hundred extras on board, making a total of some 2,400. And the accommodation was none too large for the regular force. Space that other ships use for living quarters was here devoted to extra protection, elaborate compartmentation. The crew slept forward in hammocks swung so close together that they touched. Aft the junior officers were crowded four to a tiny room. The mess deck was dark and airless. But all realized that these discomforts were the price they paid for strength. Like giving up butter for guns.

There had been much speculation among the crew as to where they were going. Most of them thought it was a raiding expedition against British merchantmen such as Luetjens had conducted so successfully with the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*. The extra men made that credible; they might be prize crews for captured vessels. Some had heard that the *Bismarck* was going to capture the Azores for the Reich.

Others declared that they were headed for the Pacific to join the Japanese Fleet. But that wasn't likely—no tropical kits had been issued.

The exultant mood of victory can't be maintained indefinitely. The inevitable reaction came the second day. The *Prinz Eugen* turned towards home. The weather had grown cold and overcast, with snow squalls, sleet and mist. Most of the men of the *Bismarck* had little experience of the vast emptiness of the ocean. They realized they were alone and far from home.

Presently they became aware that they were being hunted. Off the southern tip of Greenland, on the morning of the 26th, a plane was heard. Soon an American-built Catalina appeared through a break in the clouds, almost overhead. Every A-A gun began to hammer, putting up a terrific barrage, and the plane disappeared. But a little later another one was there watching. The crew had the feeling of long arms reaching towards them.

Then a disturbing rumour went around the ship. There had been a quarrel between Luetjens and Captain Lindemann. Through his closed doors the Admiral was heard shouting angrily. Lindemann had pointed out that the British would now concentrate every available unit, that they would never rest until they had hunted down the *Bismarck*. He urged the Admiral to turn towards home at once.

Luetjens angrily vetoed this suggestion. He announced to the crew that he was leading them on to more victories. They cheered and felt

much better. Nevertheless they began to watch the horizon hoping for reinforcements.

It wasn't help that came next day. There was a buzzing like a swarm of bees and a squadron of planes came over—the Royal Navy's Swordfish flying boats had found their quarry. One after the other they swooped close to the water, released their torpedoes and banked away. One torpedo struck full amidships. A column of water leaped higher than the masthead, and the ship was jolted from end to end. The damage control crew found that a compartment had been penetrated and filled with water.

It was no crippling damage, yet it seemed to have a profound effect on Admiral Luetjens. Probably at this point he also received disturbing news by radio, information of strong British concentrations moving to intercept him. That, in a man of his temperament, might, together with the plane attack, cause the full swing from elation to despair.

He called the crew together and made an extraordinary speech. He said the *Bismarck* would be forced to do battle. U-boats and planes, he hoped, would come to help meet the British onslaught. If not, the *Bismarck* would take more than one of her opponents to the bottom with her. "Men, remember your oath; be true to the Fuehrer to death."

The effect of this on the young men was devastating. They had been told that they were invincible, that their ship was unsinkable. Now, suddenly, there was talk of dying!

To repair the Admiral's blunder, a message

was circulated among the men. Help, it said, was on the way. A flotilla of U-boats was approaching; planes were coming—soon there'd be 200 of them overhead.

The crew believed the statement. Their spirits went up. All day men peered towards the horizon.

Since the encounter with the *Hood*, the *Bismarck* had sailed southwest and then south. Now, three days after the battle, she was headed towards Finisterre, hoping to reach the French coast and creep along it to a safe harbour. But as darkness settled down that evening a squadron of Swordfish made another sudden attack, scoring three hits. Two torpedoes did little damage, but the third struck the steering gear, jamming the rudders at an angle. The ship began to turn in circles.

There was frantic activity on board. The Knight's Insignia of the Iron Cross was promised the man who could repair the rudders. Engines were stopped and a diver went overside. He put forth immense efforts, but when the *Bismarck* resumed way she still moved in circles.

Now the organized life of the ship was disrupted. There was shouting and aimless running around. In the midst of the confusion came an ironic note, a radio message from the Fuehrer: "All our thoughts are with our victorious comrades."

They tried desperately to steer with the engines. But the ship limped along slowly, from side to side like a drunken man.

An hour after midnight a flotilla of British destroyers came out of the dark. They circled the *Bismarck* like a pack of dogs around a wounded bear, darting in now and then to discharge torpedoes. More compartments were hit and flooded. There were increasing casualties.

The ship's command tried to give the crew's morale another shot in the arm. This time the message was specific: "Early in the morning tugs will come to our assistance, and fourscore planes."

Some of the crew believed it. Luetjens didn't. He made one grand gesture, a message to Hitler: "We shall fight to the last shell. Long live the Fuehrer, the Chief of the Fleet."

After that he cracked. He was heard through his door, shouting hysterically: "Do what you like. I'm through."

The next morning was overcast and a cold wind whipped the ocean into whitecaps. On the horizon appeared the heavyweights of Britain's Grand Fleet, the *Rodney* and the *George V*. They opened fire with their 16-inch guns at about 11 miles, then moved in to half that range. A 16-inch shell weighs 2,100 pounds, travels half a mile a second. Every time one struck, the *Bismarck* rocked and shuddered. But for a while she fought back, firing salvo for salvo.

The break came when a shell wrecked the main control station. That ended the *Bismarck* as a co-ordinated fighting machine. Her crew still fought the individual turrets by local control, but the shooting was wild.

The *Rodney* and *George V* moved in closer, within two miles. They sent every shell home with methodical precision. The riddled mast hung like a crazy tangle of vines until a shell cut it off at the base and it came crashing down on the deck. Flames poured out of the funnel. One turret leaned over, its guns cocked towards the sky. No vessel had ever taken such punishment before and remained afloat.

Now morale went to pieces. The crew of one turret mutinied, ran away. After a moment's hesitation their officer ran too. In another turret, when the men refused to obey, the officer ran too. In another turret, when the men refused to obey the officer shot them down.

Soon the ship began to heel slowly to port and water poured in through shell holes and sprung plates. It flooded deck after deck, sucking and gurgling through the labyrinth of chambers and passages. Some compartments were shut off and many men were drowned as water rose to the ceilings. Others fought their way up to the air, jamming the companion-ways.

The top deck became an inferno. Holes opened, men's clothes were ripped off by explosions. Wounded men and boys were shrieking and the dead lay everywhere.

The panic-driven mob tried to get back below decks. But the ladders were packed with men fighting their way up from the rising water below. They fought each other and fell off the ladders in struggling masses.

By now the ship was almost over on her beam. Many were already struggling in the

water, others crawling out over the black glistening bulge of the hull. Slowly the bow tilted up. Stern first the *Bismarck* slid beneath the surface.

The British ships moved in to rescue. About a hundred Germans caught ropes thrown to them and were hauled up. Then U-boats were reported approaching and the British, unwilling to be caught motionless, moved away, leaving hundreds of Germans still struggling hopelessly in the sea.

The rescued men were haggard and hollow-eyed, as if they had gone through months of torture. Days later, after, they had been put to bed, rested, given restoratives, they were still dazed. They hardly spoke, even to each other. They reminded one observer of the legend of the Zombies, the living-dead of the West Indies who walk without souls. It was more than physical shock that they had suffered. There had been shattered the faith on which their lives had been built—the belief in their own invincibility.

PRINCIPAL WAR DATES

1940

June

15 Russian troops enter Lithuania (New government follows).

16 Russian troops enter Estonia and Latvia (New government follows).

22 Germany's Terms to France Accepted.

28 General de Gaulle Recognised by British Government.

,, Rumania Cedes Bessarabia and N. Bukovina to U. S. S. R.

July

3 British Action Against French Fleet.

8 Japan's "Monroe Doctrine" (moves against Indo-China).

10 Battle of Britain Starts.

12 Pétain becomes Chief of State.

17 Closing of Burma Road.

21 Union of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia with U. S. S. R.

29 Supreme Court for Riom Trial set up.

August

30 Rumania Accepts "Vienna Award" (Territory ceded to Hungary)

September

27 German-Italian-Japanese 10-year Pact.

October

28 Italy Attacks Greece.

November	
11	Attack on Italian Warships at Taranto.
30	Nanking Treaty.
December	
9	Start of Libyan Offensive.
1941	
February	
6	Capture of Benghazi.
March	
26	Capture of Keren.
28	Naval Victory off Cape Matapan.
30	Benghazi Evacuated.
April	
5	Capture of Addis Ababa.
6	Germany Attacks Yugoslavia and Greece.
May	
10	Hess Flies to Britain.
20	Germans Attack Crete.
27	Sinking of the "Bismarck".
June	
7	Collapse of Iraqi Rebellion.
14	Invasion of Syria.
21	Capture of Damascus.
22	Germany Invades Russia.
July	
12	Syrian Armistice.
August	
16	Atlantic Charter.
30	Invasion of Iran.

September	
11	Roosevelt's Warning to Hitler.
20	Abdication of Shah.
October	
20	Tojo Becomes Premier.
December	
8	Pearl Harbour.

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